

THE
CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

VOL. XXI.

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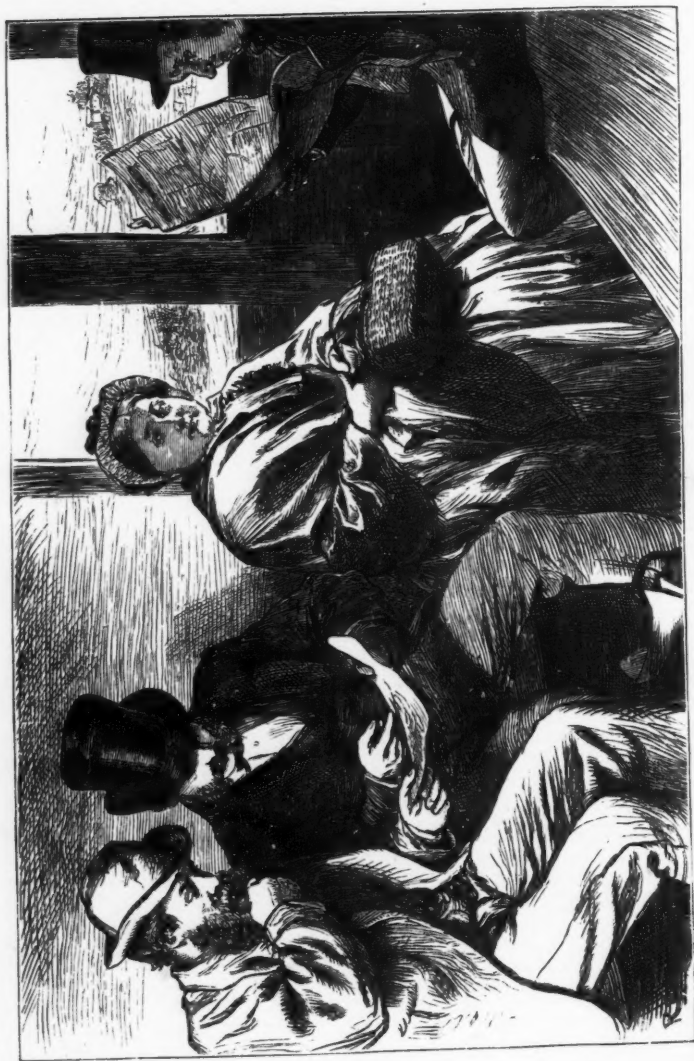
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JANUARY TO JUNE, 1870.

LONDON:
SMITH, ELDER & CO., 15, WATERLOO PLACE.

1870.

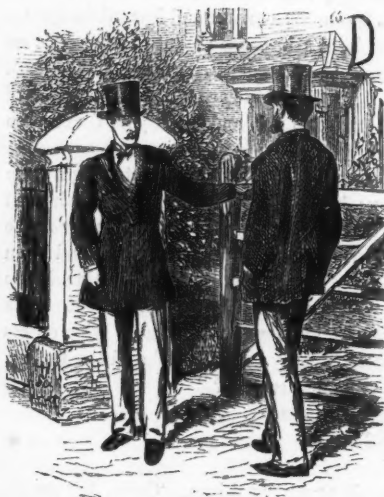


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JANUARY, 1870.

Put Yourself in His Place.

CHAPTER XXVIII.



"DOCTOR," said Mr. Carden, "you are an old friend, and a discreet man; I will confide the truth to you."

"You may save yourself the trouble. I have watched the whole progress of this amour up to the moment when you gave them the advantage of your paternal wisdom, and made them both miserable."

"It is very unreasonable of them, to be miserable."

"Oh, lovers parted could never yet make themselves happy with reason."

"But why do you say parted? All I said was 'no engagement till you can make

a settlement: and don't compromise her in the meanwhile.' I did not mean to interdict occasional visits."

"Then why not say so? That is so like people. You made your unfavourable stipulation plain enough; but the little bit of comfort, you left that in doubt. This comes of not putting yourself in his place. I have had a talk with him about it, and he thinks he is not to show his face here till he is rich enough to purchase your daughter of you."

"But I tell you he has misunderstood me."

"Then write to him and say so."

"No, no; you take an opportunity to let him know he has really rather overrated my severity, and that I trust to his honour, and do not object to a visit—say once a week."

"It is a commission I will undertake with pleasure."

"And do you really think that will do her bodily health any good?"

Before Doctor Amboyne could reply, the piano was suddenly touched in the next room, and a sweet voice began to sing a cheerful melody.

"Hush!" said Doctor Amboyne. "Surely I know that tune. Yes, I have heard *the other* whistle it."

"She has not sung for ever so long," remarked Mr. Carden.

"And I think I can tell you why she is singing now: look at this picture of Hope; I just told her I had a male patient afflicted with her complaint, and the quick-witted creature asked me directly if I thought this picture would do him any good. I said yes, and I'd take it to him."

"Come, Doctor, that couldn't make her sing."

"Why not? Heart can speak to heart, even by a flower or a picture. The separation was complete; sending this symbol has broken it a little, and so she is singing. This is a lesson for us ruder and less subtle spirits. Now mind, thwarted love seldom kills a busy man; but it often kills an idle woman, and your daughter is an idle woman. He is an iron pot, she is a china vase. Please don't hit them too hard with the hammer of paternal wisdom, or you will dent my iron pot, and break your China vase to atoms."

Having administered this warning, Doctor Amboyne went straight from Woodbine Villa to Little's factory; but Little was still in London; he had gone there to take out patents. Bayne promised to send the Doctor a line immediately on his return. Nevertheless, a fortnight elapsed, and then Doctor Amboyne received a short mysterious line to tell him Mr. Little had come home, and would be all the better of a visit. On receipt of this the Doctor went at once to the works, and found young Little lying on his carpenter's bench in a sort of gloomy apathy. "Hallo!" said the Doctor, in his cheerful way, "why what's the matter now?"

"I'm fairly crushed," groaned the inventor.

"And what has crushed you?"

"The roundabout swindle."

"There, now, he invents words as well as things. Come, tell me all about the roundabout swindle."

"No, no; I haven't the heart left to go through it all again, even in words. One would think an inventor was the enemy of the human race. Yes, I will tell you; the sight of you has revived me a bit; it always does. Well, then, you know I am driven to invention now; it is my only chance: and, ever since Mr. Carden spoke to me, I have given my whole soul to the best way of saw-grinding by machinery. The circular saws beat me, for a while, but I mastered them; see, there's the model. I'm going to

burn it this very afternoon. Well, a month ago, I took the other model—the long-saw grinder—up to London, to patent the invention, as you advised me. I thought I'd just have to exhibit the model, and lodge the description in some Government office, and pay a fee, of course, to some swell, and so be quit of it. Lord bless you—first I had to lay the specification before the Court of Chancery, and write a petition to the Queen, and pay, and, what is worse, wait. When I had paid, and waited, I got my petition signed, not by the Queen, but by some Go-between, and then I must take it to the Attorney-General. He made me pay—and wait. When I had waited ever so long, I was sent back to where I had come from—the Home Office. But even then I could not get to the Queen. Another of her Go-betweens nailed me, and made me pay, and wait: these locusts steal your time as well as your money. At last, a copy of a copy of a copy of my patent got to the Queen, and she signed it like a lady at once, and I got it back. Then I thought I was all right. Not a bit of it: the Queen's signature wasn't good till another of her Go-betweens had signed it. I think it was the Home Secretary this time. This Go-between bled me again, and sent me, with my hard-earned signatures, to the Patent Office. There they drafted, and copied, and docketed, and robbed me of more time and money. And, when all was done, I had to take the document back to one of the old Go-betweens that I hoped I had worn out, the Attorney-General. He signed, and bled me out of some more money. From him to the other Go-betweens at Whitehall. From them to the Stamp Office, if I remember right, and, oh Lord, didn't I fall among leeches there? They drafted, they copied, they engrossed, they juggled me out of time and money without end. The first leech was called the Lord Keeper of the Seal; the second leech was called the Lord Chancellor; it was some Go-between that acted in his name: the third leech was the Clerk of the Patents. They demanded more copies, and then employed more Go-betweens to charge ten times the value of a copy, and nailed the balance, no doubt. 'Stand and deliver thirty pounds for this stamp.' 'Stand and deliver to me that call myself the Chancellor's purse-bearer—and there's no such creature—two guineas.' 'Stand and deliver seven, thirteen, to the clerk of the Hanaper'—and there's no such thing as a Hanaper. 'Stand and deliver three, five,' to a Go-between that calls himself the Lord Chancellor again, and isn't. 'Stand and deliver six, nought, to a Go-between that acts for the deputy, that ought to put a bit of sealing-wax on the patent, but hasn't the brains to do it himself, so you must pay me a fancy price for doing it, and then I won't do it; it will be done by a clerk at twenty-five shillings a week.' And, all this time, mind you, no disposition to soften all this official peculation by civility; no misgiving that the next wave of civilization may sweep all these Go-betweens and leeches out of the path of progress; no, the deputy-vice-Go-betweens all scowled, as well as swindled: they broke my heart so, often I sat down in their ante-chambers, and the scalding tears ran down my cheeks, at being pillaged of my time, as well as my money, and treated

like a criminal—for what? For being, in my small way, a national benefactor."

"Ay," said the Doctor, "you had committed the crime of Brains; and the worse crime of declining to be starved in return for them. I don't rebel against the fees so much: their only fault is that they are too heavy, since the monopoly they profess to secure is short-lived, and yet not very secure; the Lord Chancellor, as a judge, has often to upset the patent which he has sold in another character. But that system of go-betweens, and deputy-go-betweens, and deputy-lieutenant-go-betweens, and of nobody doing his own business in matters of State, it really is a national curse, and a great blot upon the national intellect. It is a disease; so let us name it. We doctors are great at naming diseases; greater than at curing them.

Let us call it VICARIA,
This English malaria.

Of this Vicaria, the loss of time and money you have suffered is only one of the fruits, I think."

"All I know is, they made my life hell for more than a month; and if I have ever the misfortune to invent anything more, I'll keep it to myself. I'll hide it, like any other crime. But no; I never will invent another thing: never, never."

"Stuff! Methinks I hear a duck abjure natation. You can't help inventing."

"I will help it. What, do you think I'll be such an ass as to have Brains in a country where Brains are a crime? Doctor, I'm in despair."

"Then it is time to cast your eyes over this little picture."

The inventor turned the little picture listlessly about. "It is a woman, with an anchor. It's a figure of Hope."

"Beautifully painted, is it not?"

"The tints are well laid on: but, if you'll excuse me, it is rather flat." He laid the picture down, and turned away from it. "Ah, Hope, my lass, you've come to the wrong shop."

"Not she. She was painted expressly for you, and by a very beautiful girl."

"Oh, Doctor, not by——"

"Yes; she sends it you."

"Ah!" And he caught Hope up, and began to devour her with kisses, and his eyes sparkled finely.

"I have some good news, too, for you. Mr. Carden tells me he never intended to separate you entirely from his daughter. If you can be moderate, discreet, old before your time, etc., and come only about once a week, and not compromise her publicly, you will be as welcome as ever."

"That is good news, indeed. I'll go there this very day; and I'll patent the circular saw."

"There's a non-sequitur for you!"

"Nothing of the kind, sir. Why, even the Queen's Go-betweens will

never daunt me, now I can go and drink love and courage direct from *her* eyes ; nothing can chill nor discourage me now. I'll light my forge again, and go to work, and make a few sets of carving-tools, and that will pay the Go-betweens for patenting my circular-saw grinder. But first I'll put on my coat and go to heaven."

"Had you not better postpone that till the end of your brilliant career as an inventor and a lover?"

"No ; I thirst for heaven, and I'll drink it." So he made his toilette, thanked and blessed the good Doctor, and off to Woodbine Villa.

Grace Carden saw him coming, and opened the door to him herself, red as scarlet, and her eyes swimming. She scarcely made an effort to contain herself this time, and when she got him into the drawing-room all to herself, she cried, for joy and tenderness, on his shoulder ; and it cost him a gulp or two, I can tell you : and they sat hand in hand, and were never tired of gazing at each other : and the hours flew by unheeded. All their trouble was as though it had never been. Love brightened the present, the future, and even the past. He did not tell Grace one word of what he had suffered from Vicaria—I thank thee, Doctor, for teaching me that word—it had lost all interest to him. Love and happiness had annihilated its true character—like the afternoon sun gilding a far-off pigsty.

He did mention the subject, however, but it was in these terms : "And, dearest, I'm hard at work inventing, and I patent all my inventions ; so I hope to satisfy your father before two years."

And Grace said, "Yes ; but don't overwork your poor brain, and worry yourself. I am yours in heart, and that is something, I hope. I know it is to me ; I wouldn't change with any wife in Christendom."

CHAPTER XXIX.

At the end of two months the situation of affairs was as follows :—

Grace Carden received a visit every week from Henry, and met him now and then at other houses : she recovered her health and spirits, and, being of a patient sex, was quite contented, and even happy. Frederick Coventry visited her often, and she received his visits quite graciously, now, that the man she loved was no longer driven from her. She even pitied him, and was kind to him, and had misgivings that she had used him ill. This feeling he fostered, by a tender, dejected, and inoffensive manner. Boiling with rage inside, this consummate actor had the art to feign resignation ; whereas, in reality, he was secretly watching for an opportunity to injure his rival. But no such opportunity came.

Little, in humble imitation of his sovereign, had employed a Go-between to employ a Go-between, to deal with the state Go-betweens and deputy Go-betweens, that hampered the purchase—the word "grant" is out of place, bleeding is no boon,—of a patent from the crown, and by

this means, he had done, in sixty days, what a true inventor will do in twenty-four hours, whenever the various metallic ages shall be succeeded by the age of reason; he had secured his two saw-grinding inventions, by Patent, in Great Britain, the Canadas, and the United States of America. He had another invention perfected: it was for forging axes and hatchets by machinery: but this he did not patent: he hoped to find his remuneration in the prior use of it for a few months. Mere priority is sometimes a great advantage in this class of invention, and there are no fees to pay for it, nor deputy-lieutenant-vice-Go-betweens' antechambers for genius to cool its heels and heart in.

But one thing soon became evident. He could not work his inventions without a much larger capital.

Dr. Amboyne and he put their heads together over this difficulty, and the Doctor advised him in a more erudite style than usual.

"True invention," said he, "whether literary or mechanical, is the highest and hardest effort of the mind. It is an operation so absorbing, that it often weakens those pettier talents, which make what we call the clever man. Therefore the inventor should ally himself with some person of talent and energy, but no invention. Thus supported, he can have his fits of abstraction, his headaches, his heart-aches, his exultations, his depressions, and no harm done; his dogged associate will plough steadily on all the time. So, after all, your requiring capital is no great misfortune; you must look out for a working capitalist. No sleeping partner will serve your turn; what you want is a good, rich, vulgar, energetic man, the pachydermatouser the better."

Henry acted on this advice, and went to London in search of a moneyed partner. Oh, then it was he learned—

The hell it is in suing long to bide.

He found capitalists particularly averse to speculate in a patent. It took him many days to find out what moneyed men were open to that sort of thing at all; and, when he got to them, they were cold. They had all been recently bitten by harebrained inventors.

Then he represented that it was a matter of judgment, and offered to prove by figures that his saw-grinding machines must return three hundred per cent. Those he applied to would not take the trouble to study his figures. In other words he came at the wrong time. And the wrong time is as bad as the wrong thing, or worse. Take a note of that please: and then forget it.

At last he gave up London in despair, and started for Birmingham.

The train stopped at Tring, and, as it was going on again, a man ran towards the third-class carriage Little was seated in. One of the servants of the company tried to stop him, very properly. He struggled with that official, and eventually shook him off. Meantime the train was accelerating its pace. In spite of that, this personage made a run and a bound, and, half leaping, half scrambling, got his head and shoulders over the door,

and there oscillated, till Little grabbed him with both hands, and drew him powerfully in, and admonished him. "That is a fool-hardy trick, sir, begging your pardon."

"Young man," panted the invader, "do you know who you're a speaking to?"

"No. The Emperor of China?"

"No such trash; it's Ben Bolt, a man that's bad to beat."

"Well, you'll get beat some day, if you go jumping in and out of trains in motion."

"A many have been killed that way," suggested a huge woman in the corner with the meekest and most timid voice imaginable.

Mr. Bolt eyed the speaker with a humorous glance. "Well, if I'm ever killed that way, I'll send you a letter by the post. Got a sweetheart, ma'am?"

"I've got a good husband, sir," said she, with mild dignity, and pointed to a thin, sour personage opposite, with his nose in a newspaper. Deep in some public question, he ignored this little private inquiry.

"That's unlucky," said Bolt, "for here am I, just landed from Victoria, and money in both pockets. And where do you think I am going now? to Chester, to see my father and mother, and show them I was right after all. They wanted me to go to school: I wouldn't. Leathered me; I howled, but wouldn't spell; I was always bad to beat. Next thing was, they wanted to make a tanner of me. I wouldn't. 'Give me fifty pounds and let me try the world,' says I. They wouldn't. We quarrelled. My uncle interfered one day, and gave me fifty pounds. 'Go to the devil,' said he, 'if you like; so as you don't come back.' I went to Sydney, and doubled my fifty; got a sheep-run, and turned my hundred into a thousand. Then they found gold, and that brought up a dozen ways of making money, all of 'em better than digging. Why, ma'am, I made ten thousand pounds by selling the beastliest lemonade you ever tasted for gold-dust at the mines. That was a good swop, wasn't it? So now I'm come home to see if I can stand the old country and its ways; and I'm going to see the old folk. I haven't heard a word about them this twenty years."

"Oh, dear, sir," said the meek woman, "twenty years is a long time. I hope you won't find them dead an' buried."

"Don't say that; don't say that!" And the tough, rough man showed a grain of feeling. He soon recovered himself, though, and said more obstreperously than ever, "If they are, I disown 'em. None of your faint-hearted people for me. I despise a chap that gives in before eighty. I'm Ben Bolt, that is bad to beat. Death himself isn't going to bowl me out till I've had my innings."

"La, sir; pray don't talk so, or you'll anger them above, and ten to one upset the train."

"That's one for me, and two for yourself, ma'am."

"Yes, sir," said the mild soul. "I have got my husband with me, and you are only a bachelor, sir."

"How d'ye know that?"

"I think you'd ha' been softened down a bit, if you'd ever had a good wife."

"Oh, it is because I speak loud. That is with bawling to my shepherds half a mile off. Why, if I'm loud, I'm civil. Now, young man, what is *your* trouble?"

Henry started from his reverie, and looked astonished.

"Out with it," shouted Mr. Bolt; "don't set grizzling there. What with this lady's husband, dead and buried in that there newspaper, and you, that sets brooding like a hen over one egg, it's a Quakers' meeting, or nearly. If you've been and murdered anybody, tell us all about it. Once off your mind you'll be more sociable."

"A man's thoughts are his own, Mr. Bolt. I'm not so fond of talking about myself as you seem to be."

"Oh, I can talk, or I can listen. But you won't do neither. Pretty company *you* are, a hatching of your egg."

"Well, sir," said the meek woman to Henry, "the rough gentleman he is right. If you are in trouble, the best way is to let your tongue put it off your heart."

"I'm sure you are very kind," said Henry, "but really my trouble is one of those out-of-the-way things that do not interest people. However, the long and the short is, I'm an inventor. I have invented several things, and kept them dark, and they have paid me. I live at Hillsborough. But now I have found a way of grinding long saws and circular saws by machinery, at a saving of five hundred per cent. labour. That saving of labour represents an enormous profit,—a large fortune; so I have patented the invention, at my own expense. But I can't work it without a capitalist. Well, I have ransacked London, and all the moneyed men shy me. The fools will go into railways, and bubbles, and a lot of things that are blind chance, but they won't even study my drawings, and figures, and I've made it clear enough too."

"I'm not of their mind then," said Bolt. "My rule is never to let another man work my money. No railway shares nor gold mines for Ben Bolt. My money goes with me, and I goes with my money."

"Then you are a man of sense; and I only wish you had money enough to go into this with me."

"How do you know how much money I've got? You show me how to turn twenty thousand into forty thousand, or forty thousand into eighty thousand, and I'll soon find the money."

"Oh, I could show you how to turn fifteen thousand into fifty thousand." He then unlocked his black bag, and showed Bolt some drawings that represented the grinders by hand at work on long saws and circular saws. "This," said he, "is the present system." He then pointed out its defects. "And this," said he, "is what I propose to substitute." Then he showed him drawings of his machines at work. "And these figures represent the saving in labour. Now, in this branch

of cutlery, the labour is the manufacturer's main expense. Make ten men grind what fifty used, you put forty workmen's wages in your pocket."

"That's tall talk."

"Not an inch taller than the truth."

Mr. Bolt studied the drawings, and, from obstreperous, became quite quiet and absorbed. Presently he asked Henry to change places with him; and, on this being complied with, he asked the meek woman to read him Henry's figures slowly. She stared, but complied. Mr. Bolt pondered the figures, and examined the drawings again. He then put a number of questions to Henry, some of them very shrewd; and, at last, got so interested in the affair, that he would talk of nothing else.

As the train slackened for Birmingham, he said to Henry, "I'm no great scholar; I like to see things in the body. On we go to Hillsborough."

"But I want to talk to a capitalist or two at Birmingham."

"That is not fair; I've got the refusal."

"The deuce you have!"

"Yes, I've gone into it with you; and the others wouldn't listen. Said so yourself."

"Well, but, Mr. Bolt, are you really in earnest? Surely this is quite out of your line?"

"How can it be out of my line if it pays? I've bought and sold sheep, and wool, and land, and water, and houses, and tents, and old clothes, and coffee, and tobacco, and cabs. And swopped—my eye, how I have swopped! I've swopped a housemaid under articles for a pew in the church, and a milch cow for a whale that wasn't even killed yet; I paid for the chance. I'm at all in the ring, and devilish bad to beat. Here goes—high, low, Jack, and the game."

"Did you ever deal in small beer?" asked Henry, satirically.

"No," said Bolt, innocently. "But I would in a minute if I saw clear to the nimble shilling. Well, will you come on to Hillsborough and settle this? I've got the refusal for twenty-four hours I consider."

"Oh, if you think so, I will go on to Hillsborough. But you said you were going to see your parents, after twenty years' absence and silence."

"So I am; but they can keep: what signifies a day or two more after twenty years?" He added, rather severely, as one whose superior age entitled him to play the monitor, "Young man, I never make a toil of a pleasure."

"No more do I. But how does that apply to visiting your parents?"

"If I was to neglect business to gratify my feelings, I should be grizzling all the time; and wouldn't that be making a toil of a pleasure?"

Henry could only grin in reply to this beautiful piece of reasoning; and that same afternoon the pair were in Hillsborough, and Mr. Bolt, under Henry's guidance, inspected the grinding of heavy saws, both long and circular. He noted, at Henry's request, the heavy, dirty labour.

He then mounted to the studio, and there Henry lectured on his models, and showed them working. Bolt took it all in, his eye flashed, and then he put on, for the first time, the coldness of the practised dealer. "It would take a good deal of money to work this properly," said he, shaking his head.

"It has taken a good deal of brains to invent it."

"No doubt, no doubt. Well, if you want me to join you, it must be on suitable terms. Money is tight."

"Well, propose your own terms."

"That's not my way. I'll think it over before I put my hand to paper. Give me till to-morrow."

"Certainly."

On this Mr. Bolt went off as if he had been shot.

He returned next day, and laid before Henry an agreement drawn by the sharpest attorney in Hillsborough, and written in a clerk's hand. "There," said he, briskly, "you sign that, and I'll make my mark, and at it we go."

"Stop a bit," said Henry. "You've been to a lawyer, have you? Then I must go to one too; fair play's a jewel."

Bolt looked disappointed; but the next moment he affected cheerfulness, and said, "That is fair. Take it to your lawyer directly."

"I will," said Henry; but, instead of a lawyer, he took it to his friend Doctor Amboyne, told him all about Ben Bolt, and begged his advice on the agreement. "Ought he to have the lion's share like this?"

"The moneyed man generally takes that. No commodity is sold so far beyond its value as money. Let me read it."

The purport of the agreement was as follows:—New premises to be built by Bolt, a portion of the building to be constructed so that it could be easily watched night and day, and in that part the patent saw-grinding machines to be worked. The expenses of this building to be paid off by degrees out of the gross receipts, and meanwhile Mr. Bolt was to receive five per cent. interest for his outlay and two-thirds of the profits, if any. Mr. Little to dispose of his present factory, and confine his patents to the joint operation.

Doctor Amboyne, on mature consideration, advised Little to submit to all the conditions, except the clause confining his operations and his patents. They just drew their pen through that clause, and sent the amended agreement to Bolt's hotel. He demurred to the amendment; but Henry stood firm, and proposed a conference of four. This took place at Doctor Amboyne's house, and, at last, the agreement was thus modified: the use of the patents in Hillsborough to be confined to the firm of Bolt and Little; but Little to be free to sell them, or work them, in any other town, and also free, in Hillsborough, to grind saws by hand, or do any other established operation of cutlery.

The parties signed; and Bolt went to work in earnest. With all his resolution, he did not lack prudence. He went into the suburbs for his

site, and bought a large piece of ground. He advertised for contracts and plans, and brought them all to Henry, and profited by his practical remarks.

He warned the builders it must be a fortress, as well as a factory; but, at Henry's particular request, he withheld the precise reason. "I'm not to be rattened," said he. "I mean to stop that little game. I'm Ben Bolt, that's bad to beat."

At last the tender of Mr. White was accepted, and, as Mr. Bolt, experienced in the delays of builders, tied him tight as to time, he, on his part, made a prompt and stringent contract with Messrs. Whitbread, the brickmakers, and began to dig the foundations.

All this Henry communicated to Grace, and was in high spirits over it, and then so was she. He had a beautiful frame made for the little picture she had given him, and hung it up in his studio. It became the presiding genius, and indeed the animating spirit, of his life.

Both to him and Grace the bright and hopeful period of their love had come at last. Even Bolt contributed something to Little's happiness. The man, hard as he was in business, was not without a certain rough geniality; and then he was so brisk and bustling. His exuberant energy pleased the inventor, and formed an agreeable relief to his reveries and deep fits of study.

The prospect was bright, and the air sunny. In the midst of all which there rose in the horizon a cloud, like that seen by Elijah's servant, a cloud no bigger than a man's hand.

Bolt burst into the studio one day, like a shell, and, like a shell, exploded.

"Here's a pretty go! We are all at a standstill. The brickmakers have struck."

"Why, what is the matter?"

"Fourpence. Young Whitbread, our brickmaker's son, is like you—a bit of an inventor: he altered the shape of the bricks, to fit a small hand-machine, and Whitbreads reckoned to save tenpence a thousand. The brickmakers objected directly. Whitbreads didn't want a row, so they offered to share the profit. The men sent two of their orators to parley: I was standing by Whitbread when they came up; you should have heard 'em; anybody would have sworn the servants were masters, and the masters negro slaves. When the servants had hectored a bit, the masters, meek and mild, said they would give them sixpence out of the tenpence sooner than they should feel dissatisfied. No; that wouldn't do. 'Well, then,' says young Whitbread, 'are you agreed what will do?' 'Well,' said one of the servants, 'we will allow you to make the bricks, if you give us the tenpence.'"

"That was cool," said Henry. "To be sure, all brainless beggars try to starve invention."

"Yes, my man; and you grumbled at my taking two-thirds. Labour is harder on you inventors than capital is, you see. Well, I told 'em I wondered at their cheek; but the old man stopped me, and spoke quite

mild: says he, 'You are too hard on us; we ought to gain a trifle by our own improvement; if it had come from you, we should pay you for it;' and he should stand by his offer of sixpence. So then the men told them it would be the worse for them, and the old gentleman gave a bit of sigh, and said he couldn't help that, he must live in the trade, or leave it, he didn't much care which. Next morning they all struck work; and there we are—stopped."

"Well," said Henry, "it is provoking; but you mustn't ask me to meddle. It's your business."

"It is, and I'll show you I'm bad to beat." With this doughty resolve he went off and drove the contractors: they drove the brickmakers, and the brickmakers got fresh hands from a distance, and the promise of some more.

Bolt rubbed his hands, and kept popping into the yard to see how they got on. By this means he witnessed an incident familiar to brickmakers in that district, but new to him. Suddenly loud cries of pain were heard, and two of the brickmakers held up hands covered with blood, and transfixed by needles. Some ruffian had filled the clay with needles. The sufferers were both disabled, and one went to the hospital. Tempered clay enough to make two hundred thousand bricks had been needled, and had to be cleared away at a loss of time and material.

Bolt went and told Henry, and it only worried him; he could do nothing. Bolt went and hired a watchman and a dog, at his own expense. The dog was shot dead one dark night, and the watchman's box turned over and sat upon, watchman included, while the confederates trampled fifty thousand raw bricks into a shapeless mass.

The brickmasters, however, stood firm, and at last four of the old hands returned to him, and accepted the sixpence profit due to the master's invention. These four were contribution men, that is to say they paid the Union a shilling per week for permission to make bricks; but this weekly payment was merely a sort of black-mail, it entitled them to no relief from the Union when out of work: so a three-weeks' strike brought them to starvation, and they could co-operate no longer with the genuine Union men, who were relieved from the box all this time. Nevertheless, though their poverty, and not their will, brought them back to work, they were all threatened, and found themselves in a position that merits the sympathy of all men, especially of the very poor. Starvation on one side, sanguinary threats on the other, from an Union which abandoned them in their need, yet expected them to stick by it and starve. In short, the said Union was no pupil of Amboyne; could not put itself in the place of these hungry men, and realize their dilemma; it could only see the situation from its own point of view. From that intellectual defect sprang a crime. On a certain dark night, Thomas Wilde, one of these contribution men, was burning bricks all by himself, when a body of seven men came crawling up to within a little distance. These men were what they call "victims," *i.e.*, men on strike, and receiving pay from the box.

Now, when a man stands against the fire of a kiln, he cannot see many yards from him; so five of the "victims" stood waiting, and sent two forward. These two came up to Wilde, and asked him a favour. "Eh, mister, can you let me and my mate lie down for an hour by your fire?"

"You are welcome," said honest Wilde. He then turned to break a piece of coal, and instantly one of those who had accepted his hospitality struck him on the back of the head, and the other five rushed in, and they all set on him, and hit him with cartlegs, and kicked him with their heavy shoes. Overpowered as he was, he struggled away from them, groaning and bleeding, and got to a shed about thirty yards off. But these relentless men, after a moment's hesitation, followed him, and rained blows and kicks on him again, till he gave himself up for dead. He cried out, in his despair, "Lord, have mercy on me; they have finished me," and fainted away in a pool of his own blood. But, just before he became insensible, he heard a voice say, "Thou'll burn no more bricks." Then the "victims" retired, leaving this great criminal for dead.

After a long while he came to himself, and found his arm was broken, and his body covered with cuts and bruises. His house was scarcely a furlong distant, yet he was an hour crawling to it. His room was up a short stair of ten steps. The steps beat him: he leaned on the rail at the bottom, and called out piteously, "My wife! my wife! my wife!" three times.

Mrs. Wilde ran down to him, and caught hold of his hand, and said, "Whatever is to do?"

When she took his hand the pain made him groan, and she felt something drip on to her hand. It was blood from his wounded arm. Then she was terrified, and, strong with excitement, she managed to get him into the house and lay him on the floor. She asked him, had he fallen off the kiln? He tried to reply, but could not, and fainted again. This time he was insensible for several hours. In the morning he came to, and told his cruel story to Whitbread, Bolt, and others. Bolt and Whitbread took it most to heart. Bolt went to Mr. Ransome, and put the case in his hands.

Ransome made this remark:—"Ah, you are a stranger, sir. The folk hereabouts never come to us in these Union cases. I'll attend to it, trust me."

Bolt went with this tragedy to Henry, and it worried him; but he could do nothing. "Mr. Bolt," said he, "I think you are making your own difficulties. Why quarrel with the Brickmakers' Union? Surely that is superfluous."

"Why, it is them that quarrelled with me; and I'm Ben Bolt, that is bad to beat." He armed himself with gun and revolver, and watched the Whitbreads' yard himself at night.

Two days after this, young Whitbread's wife received an anonymous letter, advising her, as a friend, to avert the impending fate of her husband, by persuading him to dismiss the police and take back his Hands.

The letter concluded with this sentence, "He is generally respected ; but we have come to a determination to shoot him."

Young Whitbread took no apparent notice of this, and, soon afterwards, the secretary of the Union proposed a conference. Bolt got wind of this, and was there when the orators came. The deputation arrived, and, after a very short preamble, offered to take the sixpence.

"Why," said Bolt, "you must be joking. Those are the terms poor Wilde came back on, and you have hashed him for it."

Old Whitbread looked the men in the face, and said, gravely, "You are too late. You have shed that poor man's blood, and you have sent an anonymous letter to my son's wife. That lady has gone on her knees to us to leave the trade, and we have consented. Fifteen years ago, your Union wrote letters of this kind to my wife (she was pregnant at the time), and drove her into her grave, with fright and anxiety for her husband. You shall not kill Tom's wife as well. The trade is a poor one at best, thanks to the way you have ground your employers down, and, when you add to that needling our clay, and burning our gear, and beating our servants to death's door, and driving our wives into the grave, we bid you good-by. Mr. Bolt, I'm the sixth brickmaster this Union has driven out of the trade by outrages during the last ten years."

"Thou's a wrong-headed old chap," said the Brickmakers' spokesman : "but thou canst not run away with place. Them as takes to it will have to take us on."

"Not so. We have sold our plant to the Barton Machine Brick-making Company ; and you maltreated them so at starting that now they won't let a single Union man set his foot on their premises."

The company in question made bricks better and cheaper than any other brickmaster ; but, making them by machinery, were *always* at war with the Brickmakers' Union, and, whenever a good chance occurred for destroying their property, it was done. They, on their part, diminished those chances greatly by setting up their works five miles from the town, and by keeping armed watchmen and police. Only these ran away with their profits.

Now, when this company came so near the town, and proceeded to work up Whitbread's clay, in execution of the contract with which their purchase saddled them, the Brickmakers' Union held a great meeting, in which full a hundred brickmakers took part, and passed extraordinary resolutions, and voted extraordinary sums of money, and recorded both in their books. These books were subsequently destroyed, for a reason the reader can easily divine who has read this narrative with his understanding.

Soon after that meeting, one Kay, a brickmaker, who was never seen to make a brick, for the best of all reasons, he lived by blood alone, was observed reconnoitring the premises, and that very night a quantity of barrows, utensils, and tools were heaped together, naphtha poured over them, and the whole set on fire.

Another dark night, twenty thousand bricks were trampled so noiselessly that the perpetrators were neither seen nor heard.

But Bolt hired more men, put up a notice he would shoot any intruder dead, and so frightened them by his blustering that they kept away, being cowards at bottom, and the bricks were rapidly made, and burnt, and some were even delivered: these bricks were carted from the yard to the building-site by one Harris, who had nothing to do with the quarrel; he was a carter by profession, and wheeled bricks for all the world.

One night this poor man's haystack and stable were all in flames in a moment, and unearthly screams issued from the latter.

The man ran out, half-naked, and his first thought was to save his good grey mare from the fire. But this act of humanity had been foreseen and provided against. The miscreants had crept into the stable, and tied the poor docile beast fast by the head to the rack; then fired the straw. Her screams were such as no man knew a horse could utter. They pierced all hearts, however hard, till her burnt body burst the burnt cords, and all fell together. Man could not aid her. But God can avenge her.

As if the poor thing could tell whether she was drawing machine-made bricks, or hand-made bricks!

The incident is painful to relate; but it would be unjust to omit it. It was characteristic of that particular Union; and, indeed, without it my reader could not possibly appreciate the brickmaking mind.

Bolt went off with this to Little; but Amboyne was there, and cut his tales short. "I hope," said he, "that the common Creator of the four-legged animal and the two-legged beasts, will see justice done between them; but you must not come here tormenting my inventor with these horrors. Your business is to relieve him of all such worries, and let him invent in peace."

"Yes," said Little, "and I have told Mr. Bolt we can't avoid a difficulty with the cutlers. But the brickmakers, what madness to go and quarrel with them! I will have nothing to do with it, Mr. Bolt."

"The cutlers! Oh, I don't mind them," said Bolt. "They are angels compared with the brickmakers. The cutlers don't poison cows, and hamstring horses, and tie them to fire; the cutlers don't fling little boys into water-pits, and knock down little girls with their fists, just because their fathers are non-Union men; the cutlers don't strew poisoned apples and oranges about, to destroy whole families like rats. Why, sir, I have talked with a man the brickmakers tried to throw into boiling lime; and another they tried to poison with beer, and, when he wouldn't drink it, threw vitriol in his eyes, and he's blind of an eye to this day. There's full half-a-dozen have had bottles of gunpowder and old nails flung into their rooms, with lighted fuses, where they were sleeping with their families; they call that 'bottling a man:' it's a familiar phrase. I've seen three cripples crawling about that have been set on by numbers and spoiled for life, and as many fired at in the dark; one has got a slug

in his head to this day. And, with all that, the greatest cowards in the world,—daren't face a man in daylight, any two of them; but I've seen the woman they knocked down with their fists, and her daughter too, a mere child at the time. No, the cutlers are men, but the brickmakers are beasts."

"All the more reason for avoiding silly quarrels with the brick-makers," said Little.

Thus snubbed, Mr. Bolt retired, muttering something about "bad to beat." He found Harris crying over the ashes of his mare, and the man refused to wheel any more machine-made bricks. Other carters, being applied to, refused also. They had received written warning, and dared not wheel one of those bricks for their lives.

The invincible Bolt bought a cart and a horse, hired two strangers, armed them and himself with revolvers, and carted the bricks himself. Five brickmakers waylaid him in a narrow lane; he took out his revolver, and told them he'd send them all to hell if one laid a finger on him: at this rude observation they fled like sheep.

The invincible carted his bricks by day, and at night rode the horse away to an obscure inn, and slept beside him, armed to the teeth.

The result of all which was that one day he burst into Little's studio shouting "Victory!" and told him two hundred thousand bricks were on the premises, and twenty bricklayers would be at work on the foundations that afternoon.

Henry Little was much pleased at that, and when Bolt told him how he had carted the bricks in person, said, "You are the man for me; you really are bad to beat."

While they were congratulating each other on this hard-earned victory, Mr. Bayne entered softly, and said, "Mr. White—to speak to Mr. Bolt."

"That is the builder," said Bolt. "Show him up."

Mr. White came in with a long face.

"Bad news, gentlemen; the Machine Brickmaking Company retires from business, driven out of trade by their repeated losses from violence."

"All the worse for the nation," said Bolt: "houses are a fancy article, got to be. But it doesn't matter to us. We have got bricks enough to go on with."

"Plenty, sir: but that is not where the shoe pinches now. The Brickmakers' Union has made it right with the Bricklayers' Union, and the Bricklayers' Union orders us to cart back every one of those machine-made bricks to the yard."

"See them — first," said Bolt.

"Well, sir, have you considered the alternative?"

"Not I. What is it?"

"Not a bricklayer in Hillsboro', or for fifty miles round, will set a brick for us: and if we get men from a distance they will be talked away, or driven away, directly. The place is picketed on every side at this moment."

Even Bolt was staggered now. "What is to be done, I wonder?"

"There's nothing to be done, but submit. When two such powerful unions amalgamate, resistance is useless, and the law of the land a dead letter. Mr. Bolt, I'm not a rich man; I've got a large family; let me beg of you to release me from the contract."

"White, you are a cur. Release you? never!"

"Then, sir, I'll go through the court, and release myself."

Henry Little was much dejected by this monstrous and unforeseen obstacle arising at the very threshold of his hopes. He felt so sad, that he determined to revive himself with a sight of Grace Carden. He pined for her face and voice. So he went up to Woodbine Villa, though it was not his day. As he drew near that Paradise, the door opened, and Mr. Frederick Coventry came out. The two men nearly met at the gate. The rejected lover came out, looking bright and happy, and saw the accepted lover arrive, looking depressed and careworn: he saw in a moment something was going wrong, and turned on his heel with a glance of triumph.

Henry Little caught that glance, and stood at the gate black with rage. He stood there about a minute, and then walked slowly home again: he felt he should quarrel with Grace if he went in, and, by a violent effort of self-restraint, he retraced his steps; but he went home sick at heart.

The mother's eye read his worn face in a moment, and soon she had it all out of him. It cost her a struggle not to vent her maternal spleen on Grace; but she knew that would only make her son more unhappy. She advised him minutely what to say to the young lady about Mr. Coventry: and, as to the other matters, she said, "You have found Mr. Bolt not so bad to beat as he tells you: for he is beaten, and there's an end of him. Now let *me* try."

"Why what on earth can you do in a case of this kind?"

"Have I ever failed, when you have accepted my assistance?"

"No: that's true. Well, I shall be glad of your assistance now, heaven knows; only I can't imagine——"

"Never mind: will you take Grace Carden if I throw her into your arms?"

"Oh, mother, can you ask me?"

Mrs. Little rang the bell, and ordered a fly. Henry offered to accompany her. She declined. "Go to bed early," said she, "and trust to your mother. We are harder to beat sometimes than a good many Mr. Bolts."

She drove to Dr. Amboyne's house, and sent in her name. She was ushered into the Doctor's study, and found him shivering over an enormous fire. "Influenza."

"Oh dear," said she, "I'm afraid you are very ill."

"Never mind that. Sit down. You will not make me any worse, you may be sure of that." And he smiled affectionately on her.

"But I came to intrude my own troubles on you."

"All the better. That will help me forget mine."

Mrs. Little seated herself, and, after a slight hesitation, opened her battery thus :—"Well, my good friend, I am come to ask you a favour. It is to try and reconcile my brother and me. If any one can do it, you can."

"Praise the method, not the man. If one could only persuade you to put yourself in his place, and him to put himself in yours, you would be both reconciled in five minutes."

"You forget we have been estranged this five-and-twenty years."

"No, I don't. The only question is, whether you can and will deviate from the practice of the world into an obese lunatic's system, both of you."

"Try *me* to begin."

The Doctor's eyes sparkled with satisfaction. "Well, then," said he, "first you must recollect all the differences you have seen between the male and female mind, and imagine yourself a man."

"Oh, dear! that is so hard. But I have studied Henry. Well, there—I have unsexed myself—in imagination."

"You are not only a man but a single-minded man, with a high and clear sense of obligation. You are a trustee, bound by honour to protect the interests of a certain woman and a certain child. The lady, under influence, wishes to borrow her son's money, and risk it on rotten security. You decline, and the lady's husband affronts you. In spite of that affront, being a high-minded man, not to be warped by petty irritation, you hurry to your lawyers to get two thousand pounds of your own, for the man who had affronted you."

"Is that so?" said Mrs. Little. "I was not aware of that."

"I have just learned it, accidentally, from the son of the solicitor Raby went to that fatal night."

A tear stole down Mrs. Little's cheek.

"Now, remember, you are not a woman, but a brave, high-minded man. In that character you pity poor Mr. Little, but you blame him a little because he fled from trouble, and left his wife and child in it. To you, who are Guy Raby—mind that, please—it seems egotistical and weak to desert your wife and child even for the grave." (The widow buried her face and wept. Twenty-five years do something to withdraw the veil the heart has cast over the judgment.) "But, whatever you feel, you utter only regret, and open your arms to your sister. She writes back in an agony, for which, being a man, you cannot make all the allowance you would if you were a woman, and denounces you as her husband's murderer, and bids you speak to her and write to her no more, and with that she goes to the Littles. Can you blame yourself that, after all this, you wait for her to review your conduct more soberly, and to invite a reconciliation?"

Mrs. Little gave Doctor Amboyne her hand. "Bitter, but wholesome

medicine!" she murmured, and then was too overcome to speak for a little while.

"Ah, my good, wise friend!" said she at last, "thick clouds seem clearing from my mind; I begin to see I was the one to blame."

"Yes; and if Raby will be as docile as you, and put himself in your place, he will tell me he was the one to blame. There's no such thing as 'the one to blame;' there very seldom is. You judged him as if he was a woman, he judged you as if you were a man. Enter an obese maniac, and applies the art of arts; the misunderstanding dissolves under it, and you are in each other's arms. But, stop"—and his countenance fell again a little: "I am afraid there is a new difficulty. Henry's refusal to take the name of Raby and be his heir." Raby was bitterly mortified, and I fear he blames me and my crotchets; for he has never been near me since. To be sure you are not responsible for Henry's act."

"No, indeed; for, between you and me, it mortified me cruelly. And now things have taken a turn,—in short, what with his love, and his jealousy, and this hopeless failure to make a fortune by inventing, I feel I can bring him to his senses. I am not pleased with Grace Carden about something; but no matter, I shall call on her and show her she must side with me in earnest. You will let my brother know I was always on his side in *that* matter, whatever other offence I may have given him years ago."

"And I am on your side, too. Your son has achieved a small independence. Bayne can carry on the little factory, and Henry can sell or lease his patents; he can never sink to a mere dependant. There, I throw my crotchets to the wind, and we will Raby your son, and marry him to Grace Carden."

"God bless you, my good and true friend! How can I ever thank you?" Her cheek flushed, and her great maternal eye sparkled, and half the beauty of her youth came back. Her gratitude gave a turn to the conversation which she neither expected nor desired.

"Mrs. Little," said Doctor Amboyne, "this is the first time you have entered my den, and the place seems transformed by your presence. My youth comes back to me with the feelings I thought time had blunted; but no, I feel that, when you leave my den again, it will be darker than ever, if you do not leave me a hope that you will one day enter it for good."

"For shame!—At our age!" said the widow.

But she spoilt the remonstrance by blushing like a girl of eighteen.

"You are not old in my eyes; and, as for me, let my years plead for me, since all those years I have lived single for your sake."

This last appeal shook Mrs. Little. She said she could not entertain any such thoughts whilst her son was unhappy. "But marry him to his Grace, and then—I don't know what folly I might not be persuaded into."

The Doctor was quite content with that. He said he would go to Raby, as soon as he could make the journey with safety, and her troubles and her son's should end.

Mrs. Little drove home, a happy mother. As for the promise she had made her old friend, it vexed her a little, she was so used to look at him in another light; but she shrugged her maternal shoulders, as much as to say, "When once my Henry leaves me—why not?"

She knew she must play the politician a little with Henry, so she opened the battery cautiously. "My dear," said she, at breakfast, "good news! Doctor Amboyne undertakes to reconcile us both to your uncle."

"All the better. Mr. Raby is a wrong-headed man, but he is a noble-minded one, that is certain."

"Yes, and I have done him injustice. Doctor Amboyne has shown me that."

She said no more. One step at a time.

Henry went up to Woodbine Villa, and Grace received him a little coldly. He asked what was the matter. She said, "They tell me you were at the very door the other day, and did not come in."

"It is true," said he. "Another had just come out. Mr. Coventry."

"And you punished *me* because that poor man had called on me. Have you not faith in me? or what is it? I shall be angry one of these days."

"No, you will not, if I can make you understand my feelings. Put yourself in my place, dearest. Here am I, fighting the good fight for you, against long odds; and, at last, the brickmakers and bricklayers have beat us. Now you know that is a bitter cup for me to drink. Well, I come up here for my one drop of comfort; and out walks my declared rival, looks into my face, sees my trouble there, and turns off with a glance of insolent triumph." (Grace flushed.) "And then consider: I am your choice, yet I am only allowed to visit you once a week."

"That is papa's doing."

"No matter; so it is. Yet my rival can come when he pleases: and no doubt he does come every other day."

"You fancy that."

"It is not all fancy; for—by heaven, there he is at the gate. Two visits to my one; there. Well, all the better, I'll talk to *him*."

He rose from his seat black with wrath.

Grace turned pale, and rang the bell in a moment.

The servant entered the room, just as Mr. Coventry knocked at the door.

"Not at home to anybody," said she.

Mr. Coventry's voice was heard to say incredulously, "Not at home?" Then he retired slowly, and did not leave the neighbourhood. He had called at an hour when Grace was always at home.

Henry sat down, and said, "Thank you, Grace." But he looked very gloomy and disturbed.

She sat down too, and then they looked at each other.

Henry was the first to speak. "We are both pupils of the good Doctor. Put yourself in my place. That man troubles our love, and makes my heavy heart a sore heart."

The tears were in Grace's eyes. "Dearest," said she, "I will not put myself in your place; you would lose by that, for I love you better than myself. Yes, it is unjust that you should be allowed to visit me but once a week, and he should visit me when he chooses. I assure you I have permitted his visits out of pure good-nature; and now I will put an end to them."

She drew her desk towards her, and wrote to Mr. Coventry. It took her some little time. She handed Henry the letter to read. He took it in his hand; but hesitated. He inquired what would be the effect of it?

"That he will never visit me again till you and I are married, or engaged, and that is the same thing. Why don't you read it?"

"I don't know: it goes against me somehow. Seems unmanly. I'll take your word for it."

This charmed Grace. "Ah," said she, "I have chosen right."

Then he kissed her hands, and blessed her: and then she told him it was nothing; he was a goose, and had no idea what she would do for him; "more than you would do for me, I know," said she.

That he denied, and then she said she might perhaps put him to the proof some day.

They were so happy together, time slipped away unheeded. It was full three hours before Henry could tear himself away, though he knew he was wanted at the works; and he went out at the gate, glowing with happiness: and Coventry, who was ready to drop with the fatigue of walking and watching just above, saw him come out triumphant.

Then it was his turn to feel a deadly qualm. However, he waited a little longer, and then made his call.

"Not at home."

Henry, on his way to the works, looked in on his mother, and told her how nobly Grace had behaved.

Mrs. Little was pleased, and it smoothed down her maternal bristles, and made it much easier for her to carry out her design. For the first time since Mr. Carden had offended her by his cold-blooded treatment of her son, she called at Woodbine Villa.

Grace was at home to see her, and met her with a blushing timidity, and piteous wistful looks, not easy to misunderstand, nor to resist.

They soon came to an understanding, and Mrs. Little told Grace what Doctor Amboyne had promised to do, and represented to her how much better it would be for Henry to fall into his uncle Raby's views, than to engage in hopeless struggles like that in which Mr. Bolt and he had just been so signally defeated. "And then, you know, my dear, you could marry next month, you two; that is to say, if *you* felt disposed: I will answer for Henry."

Grace's red face and swimming eyes told how this shaft went home. In short, she made a coy promise that she would co-operate with Mrs. Little: "and," said she, "how lucky! he has almost promised to grant me the first favour I ask him. Well, I shall entreat him to be a good nephew, and do whatever dear Mr. Raby asks him. But of course I shall not say, and then if you do, you and I"—here the young lady cut her sentence very short.

"Of course not," said Mrs. Little. "*That* will follow as a matter of course. Now, my dear, you and I are conspirators—for his good: and we must write often and let each other know all we do."

With this understanding, and a good many pretty speeches and kisses, they parted.

Doctor Amboyne did not recover so quickly as they could have wished; but they employed the interval; feelers were adroitly applied to Henry by both ladies, and they were pleased to find that he rather admired his wrong-headed uncle, and had been deeply touched by the old gentleman's address to his mother's picture.

Bolt never came near him, and the grass was beginning to grow on the condemned bricks. In short, everything seemed to incline in one direction.

There was, however, something very serious going on out of their sight.

"Not at home!" That white lie made Mr. Coventry feel sick at heart. He went home disconsolate. The same evening he received Miss Carden's letter.

The writer treated him like a gentleman, said a few words about her own peculiar position, and begged him to consider that position, and to be very generous; to cease his visits entirely for the present, and so give himself one more title to her esteem, which was all she had to give him. This was the purport, and the manner was simply perfect, so gentle yet firm: and then she flattered his *amour propre* by asking that from his generosity which she could have taken as a right: she did all she could to soften the blow. But she failed. The letter was posted too soon after Henry's visit. Behind the velvet paw that struck him, Coventry saw the claws of the jealous lover. He boiled with rage and agony, and cursed them both in his fury.

After an hour or two of phrenzy, he sat down, and wrote back a letter full of bitter reproaches and sneers. He reflected. He lighted a cigar and smoked it, biting it almost through, now and then. He burned his letter. He lay awake all night, raging and reflecting alternately, as passion or judgment got the upper hand.

In the morning he saw clearer. "Don't quarrel with *her*. Destroy *him*." He saw this as plainly as if it was written.

He wrote Grace a few sad lines, to say that of course he submitted to her will. The letter ended thus: "Since I can do nothing to please you, let me suffer to please you: even that is something." (This letter brought the tears to Grace's eyes, and she pitied and esteemed the writer.)

He put on a plain suit, and drove into Hillsborough, burning with wild ideas of vengeance. He had no idea what he should do; but he was resolved to do something. He felt capable of assassinating Little with his own hand.

I should be sorry to gain any sympathy for him; but it is only fair the reader should understand that he felt deeply aggrieved, and that we should all feel aggrieved under similar circumstances. Priority is a title, all the world over; and he had been the lady's lover first, had been encouraged, and supplanted.

Longing to wound, but not knowing how to strike, he wandered about the town, and went into several factories, and talked to some of the men, and contrived to bring the conversation round to Little, and learn what he was doing. But he gathered no information of any use to him. Then he went to Grotait's place, and tried to pump him. That sagacious man thought this odd, and immediately coupled this with his previous denunciation of Little, and drew him on.

Coventry was too much under the influence of passion to be quite master of himself that day; and he betrayed to this other Machiavel that he wished ill to Henry Little. As soon as he had thoroughly ascertained this, Grotait turned coolly on him, and said, "I am sorry Mr. Little has got enemies; for he and his partner talk of building a new factory, and that will be a good thing for us: take a score of saw-grinders off the box." Then Coventry saw he had made a mistake, and left "The Cutler's Arms" abruptly.

Next day he took a lodging in the town, and went about groping for information, and hunting for a man, whose face he knew, but not his name. He learned all about Bolt and Little's vain endeavour to build, and went and saw the place, and the condemned bricks. The sight gratified him. He visited every saw-grinder's place he could hear of; and, at last, he fell in with Sam Cole, and recognized him at once. That worthy affected not to know him, and went on grinding a big saw. Coventry stepped up to him, and said in his ear, "I want to speak with you. Make an appointment."

Cole looked rather sulkily and reluctant at being drawn from his obscurity. However, he named a low public-house, in a back slum, and there these two met that night, and for greater privacy were soon seated in a place bigger than a box and smaller than a room, with discoloured walls, and a rough wooden table before them, splashed with beer. It looked the very den to hatch villany in, and drink poison to its success.

Coventry, pale and red alternately, as fear and shame predominated, began to beat about the bush.

"You and I have reason to hate the same man. You know who I mean."

"I can guess. Begins with a Hel."

"He has wronged me deeply; and he hurt you."

"That is true, sir. I think he broke my windpipe, for I'm as hoarse as a raven ever since: and I've got one or two of the shot in my cheek still."

"Well, then, now is your time to be revenged."

"Well, I don't know about that. What he done was in self-defence ; and if I play bowls I must look for rubs."

Coventry bit his lip with impatience.

After a pause, he said, "What were you paid for that job ?"

"Not half enough."

"Twenty pounds ?"

"Nor nothing like it."

"I'll give you a hundred to do it again, only more effectually." He turned very pale when he had made this offer.

"Ah," said Cole, "anybody could tell you was a gentleman."

"You accept my offer, then ?"

"Nay, I mean it is easy to see you don't know trades. I mustn't meddle with Mr. Little now ; he is right with the trade."

"What, not if I pay you five times as much ? say ten times then ; two hundred pounds."

"Nay, we Union chaps are not malefactors. You can't buy us to injure an unoffending man. We have got our laws, and they are just ones, and, if a man will break them, after due warning, the order is given to 'do' him, and the men are named for the job ; and get paid a trifle for their risk ; and the risk is not much, the trade stand by one another too true, and in so many ways. But if a man is right with the trade, it is treason to harm him. No, I musn't move a finger against Little."

"You have set up a conscience !" said Coventry bitterly.

"You dropped yours, and I picked it up," was the Yorkshireman's ready reply. He was nettled now.

At this moment the door was opened and shut very swiftly, and a whisper came in through the momentary aperture, "Mind your eye, Sam Cole."

Coventry rushed to the door, and looked out : there was nobody to be seen.

"You needn't trouble yourself," said Cole. "You might as well run after the wind. That was a friendly warning. I know the voice, and Grotait must be on to us. Now, sir, if you offered me a thousand pounds, I wouldn't touch a hair of Mr. Little : he is right with the trade, and we should have Grotait and all the trade as bitter as death against us. I'll tell you a secret sir, that I've kept from my wife"—(he lowered his voice to a whisper)—"Grotait could hang me any day he chose. You must chink your brass in some other ear, as the saying is : only mind, you done me a good turn once, and I'll do you one now ; you have been talking to somebody else besides me, and blown yourself : so now drop your little game, and let Little alone, or the trade will make it their job to *lag* you."

Coventry's face betrayed so much alarm, that the man added, "And penal servitude wouldn't suit the likes of you. Keep out of it."

With this rough advice the conference ended, and Mr. Coventry went home thoroughly shaken in his purpose, and indeed not a little anxious

on his own account. Suppose he had been overheard! his offer to Cole was an offence within reach of the criminal law. What a mysterious labyrinth was this Trade confederacy, into which he had put his foot so rashly, and shown his game, like a novice, to the subtle and crafty Grotait. He now collected all his powers, not to injure Little, but to slip out of his own blunder.

He seized this opportunity to carry out a coup he had long meditated: he went round to a dozen timber-merchants, and contracted with them for the sale of every tree, old or young, on his estate; and, while the trees were falling like grain, and the agents on both sides measuring the fallen, he vanished entirely from Hillsborough and Bollinghope.

Doctor Amboyne's influenza was obstinate, and it was nearly a fortnight before he was strong enough to go to Cairnhope; but, at last, Mrs. Little received a line from him, to say he was just starting, and would come straight to her on his return; perhaps she would give him a cup of tea.

This letter came very opportunely. Bolt had never shown his face again; and Henry had given up all hopes of working his patents, and had said more than once he should have to cross the water and sell them.

As for Mrs. Little, she had for some time maintained a politic silence. But now she prepared for the Doctor's visit as follows: "So, then, you have no more hopes from the invincible Mr. Bolt?"

"None whatever. He must have left the town in disgust."

"He is a wise man. I want you to imitate his example. Henry, my dear, what is the great object of your life at present? Is it not to marry Grace Carden?"

"You know it is."

"Then take her from my hands. Why do you look so astonished? Have you forgotten my little boast?" Then, in a very different tone, "You will love your poor mother still, when you are married? You will say, 'I owe her my wife,' will you not?"

Henry was so puzzled he could not reply even to this touching appeal, made with eyes full of tears at the thought of parting with him.

Mrs. Little proceeded to explain: "Let me begin at the beginning. Dr. Amboyne has shown me I was more to blame than your uncle was. Would you believe it, although he refused your poor father the trust-money, he went that moment to get 2,000*l.* of his own, and lend it to us? Oh, Henry, when Dr. Amboyne told me that, and opened my eyes, I could have thrown myself at poor Guy's feet. I have been the most to blame in our unhappy quarrel; and I have sent Dr. Amboyne to say so. Now, Henry, my brother will forgive me, the Doctor says; and, oh, my heart yearns to be reconciled. You will not stand in my way, dearest?"

"Not likely. Why, I am under obligations to him, for my part."

"Yes, but Doctor Amboyne says dear Guy is deeply mortified by your refusal to be his heir. For my sake, for your own sake, and for Grace Carden's sake, change your mind now."

"What, go into his house, and wait for dead men's shoes! Find myself some day wishing in my heart that noble old fellow would die! Such a life turns a man's stomach even to think of it."

"No, no. Doctor Amboyne says that Mr. Bayne can conduct your business here, and hand you a little income, without your meddling."

"That is true."

"And, as for your patents, gentlemen can sell them to traders, or lease them out. My brother would make a settlement on Grace and you—she is his god-daughter—now that is all Mr. Carden demands. Then you could marry, and, on your small present income, make a little tour together: and dispose of your patents in other places."

"I could do great things with them in the United States."

"That is a long way."

"Why, it is only twelve days."

"Well, marry first," said the politic mother.

Henry flushed all over. "Ah!" said he, "you tempt me. Heaven seems to open its gates as you speak. But you cannot be in earnest; he made it an express condition I should drop my father's name, and take his. Disown my poor dead father! No, no, no!"

Now in reality this condition was wormwood to Mrs. Little; but she knew that if she let her son see her feeling, all was over. She was all the mother now, and fighting for her son's happiness: so she sacrificed truth to love with an effort, but without a scruple. "It is not as if it was a strange name. Henry, you compel me to say things that tear my heart to say, but—which has been your best friend, your mother, or your poor dear father?"

Henry was grieved at the question: but he was a man who turned his back on nothing. "My father loved me," said he: "I can remember that; but he deserted me, and you, in trouble; but you—you have been friend, parent, lover, and guardian angel to me. And, oh, how little I have done to deserve it all."

"Well, dear, the mother you value so highly, her name was Baby. Yes, love; and, forgive me, I honour and love my mother's name even more than I do the name of Little"—(the tears ran out of her eyes at this falsehood)—"pray take it, to oblige me, and reconcile me to my dear brother, and end our troubles for ever." Then she wept on his neck, and he cried with her.

After a while, he said, "I feel my manhood all melting away together. I am quite confused. It is hard to give up a noble game. It is hard to refuse such a mother as you. Don't cry any more, for mercy's sake: I'm like to choke. Mind, crying is work I'm not used to. What does *she* say? I am afraid I shall win her, but lose her respect."

She says she admires your pride; but you have shown enough. If you refuse any longer, she will begin to fear you don't love her as well as she loves you."

This master-stroke virtually ended the battle. Henry said nothing;

but the signs of giving way were manifest in him, so manifest that Mrs. Little became quite impatient for the Doctor's arrival to crown all.

He drove up to the door at last, and Henry ran out and brought him in. He looked pale, and sat down exhausted.

Mrs. Little restrained her impatience, and said, "We are selfish creatures to send you on our business before you are half well."

"I am well enough in health," said he, "but I am quite upset."

"What is the matter? Surely you have not failed? Guy does not refuse his forgiveness?"

"No, it is not that. Perhaps, if I had been in time—but the fact is, Guy Raby has left England."

"What, for good? Impossible!"

"Who can tell? All I know is that he has sold his horses, discharged his servants all but one, and gone abroad without a word. I was the friend of his youth,—his college chum; he must be bitterly wounded to go away like that, and not even let me know."

Mrs. Little lifted up her hands. "What have we done? what have we done? Wounded! no wonder. Oh, my poor, wronged, insulted brother!"

She wept bitterly, and took it to heart so, it preyed on her health and spirits. She was never the same woman from that hour.

While her son and her friend were saying all they could to console her, there appeared at the gate the last man any of them ever expected to see—Mr. Bolt.

Henry saw him first and said so.

"Keep him out," cried the Doctor, directly. "Don't let that bragging fool in to disturb our sorrow." He opened the door and told the servant-girl to say "Not at home."

"Not at home," said the girl.

"That's a lie!" shouted Bolt, and shoved her aside, and burst into the room. "None of your tricks on travellers," said he, in his obstreperous way. "I saw your heads through the window. Good news, my boy! I've done the trick. I wouldn't say a word till it was all settled, for Brag's a good dog, but Holdfast's a better. I've sold my building-site to some gents that want to speculate in a church, and I've made five hundred pounds profit by the sale. I'm always right, soon or late. And I've bought a factory ready made—the Star Works; bought 'em, sir, with all the gear and plant, and working hands."

"The Star Works? The largest but one in Hillsborough!"

"Ay, lad. Money and pluck together, they'll beat the world. We have got a noble place, with every convenience. All we have got to do now is to go in and win."

Young Little's eyes sparkled. "All right," said he, "I like this way the best."

Mrs. Little sighed.

Glimpses of Christmas in the Days of Old.

CHRISTMAS revelry in the days of old was one thing in the palace, another in the convent, a third in the university, and a fourth among the people. At court it was mostly a serious affair. Every step of the games was carefully prearranged, and the courtiers laughed, quaffed, and tripped up one another's heels with the nicest attention to programme. That anomalous personage with the Hibernian title, the Ruler of Misrule, was, therefore, indispensable. In England he was a mere temporary autocrat, who vanished with the holidays. But they managed this, as well as other things, differently in France, where the Merry Monarch was a permanent institution. On his return from the crusades, Philip Augustus reorganized the not very reputable band that, time out of mind, had followed the court and ministered to its amusement. He mustered the females in one troop and the males in another, set a limit to their numbers, drew up rules for their guidance, and placed the whole under the command of the King of the Ribalds. An important personage was he, being the supreme judge of all offences committed within the precincts of the palace, as well as of disputed points at play, the executioner of his own sentences, and the keeper of the royal doors as well as of the royal dice. As porter he was assisted by his band, who were considerably more useful in their way, but hardly so splendid as the Cent Gardes. The ribalds received no particular stipend, dressed as they liked, or as they could, and were generally in tatters. They were armed, too, though not very regally, with stout cudgels, and formed, on the whole, some such picture as may be realized any fine day towards harvest-time on the quays of Dublin or Liverpool. Their leader, however, fared and dressed better. An edict issued by Philip the Hardy, 1260, fixed his salary at six deniers a year and his board, with forty sous additional for a robe and a valet. But this was the smallest part of his gains. He received numerous presents, was entitled to the clothes of the criminals he executed, and levied a poll-tax of five sols a year on the magdalens of Paris, and a house-tax of two sols a week on each of their haunts. So long as courtly tastes retained their primitive coarseness, the King of the Ribalds did very well as master of the revels. On common occasions he drew up his following blindfold in the tilt-yard, armed them with clubs, and turned a pig loose among them as the prize of the lady or gentleman who should happen to knock it down; he set them grinning through horse-collars and climbing greasy poles; and, in short, he manœuvred them through all the boisterous and often uncleanly pastimes of the Dutch kermis or

English wake. Nor was he without inventions more recondite, though hardly more refined, for the higher holidays. When Philip the Fair, for instance, entertained our Edward I., the King of the Ribalds made himself up as Master Reynard. After a few gambols in character, he drew on a surplice over his fox-hide, and sang the epistle. Having aped the priest sufficiently, he assumed mitre and crosier, and aped the bishop. Finally, donning the tiara and other papal vestments, he pursued the poultry on all fours, "biting and crunching" them as he caught them, to signify the rapacity of Boniface VIII. It was at Christmas, however, that the Ribald King appeared in his might as a caterer of amusement. "In one corner of the palace," says an old chronicler, describing one of his Yule pageants, "there was a group of savage men, who made hideous grimaces and combated comically. Beside them were three beautiful girls, playing the part of sirens—*tous nues*—which was a pretty sight, and singing songs and anthems." And not far off was a scaffold, whereon was built a mimic castle. This was assailed by one party representing gallant Frenchmen, and defended by another arrayed—how may be conjectured—as stupid Englishmen. The former charged to the cry of "Montjoie St. Denis!" and the latter shrieked their national slogan, "Rosbif! Goddam!" with all their might. The "goddams,"* of course, were vanquished, and, to the delight of the spectators, "had all their throats cut"—in appearance only, we trust; though, considering the character of the times, when a bit of slaughter was often no more than a good jest, it would have been more satisfactory if the annalist had said as much. As letters progressed these rude spectacles fell out of fashion, and with them the King of the Ribalds. Being ousted from the control of the revels by the male favourite of the day, he gradually subsided into a mere executioner, finally disappearing with his crow during the ascendancy of Agnes Sorel; the last who bore the title being Stephen Musteau, who died "in his house in the Rue des Juifs" in 1448.

The influence of his successors—the Bounivets and Villequiers—depending on their capacity for providing rich and varied entertainment, they took care to surround themselves with poets and artists skilful to contrive and order masque, ballet, and banquet. The magnificence of the last has been quite sufficiently described already. We suspect, however, that it was not always so wonderful as the court chroniclers of the period would have us believe. These gentlemen were, above all things, anxious for the glorification of their patrons, and what the feast lacked in reality they contrived to supply in description—with the aid of those classics who have celebrated the gastronomic glories of Vitellius and other imperial epicures. For all that, the mediæval banquet was a brilliant thing, especially towards the Renaissance, when taste began to select the fare, and genius to mould the plate, and especially to break the monotony of the feast with the happy invention of entremets, or spectacles

* Thus Joan of Arc, among others, designated the English of that day.

between the courses. One of these entremets was a ship in full sail, which was drawn into the banquet-hall. In the ship stood a knight in armour, leading a monstrous swan by a golden chain. There was a man inside the swan, and a "salvage" at each wing, while the knight himself was attended by pages feathered like eagles. Another entremet was a room that vented a procession among the guests. First trooped a crowd bearing torches; then followed a herald and two knights, laden with wreaths of flowers; and in the rear, on a white palfrey, trotted Joy, a beautiful girl, with her hair hanging loose. The herald pronounced a speech, the knights distributed their wreaths, and Joy, climbing the table with her steed, rode up to the lord of the feast, and presented him with—a kiss. A third of these spectacles was a mountain bearing a castle. At the windows appeared the four seasons—young beauties—scattering flowers. And on the towers, singing an ode composed for the occasion, stood four youths habited as the winds. The song ceasing, the rock opened, and out sprang a griffin, shooting flames from his mouth and nostrils. He was followed by his keepers—six savage men—who danced a morrice. The seasons and the winds then descended and danced another. Afterwards all danced together. Finally, the actors resumed their places, and the mountain was trundled out. Another of these mountains bore a garden of wax flowers, tended by a poet, who gathered roses, and presented them to the ladies with suitable rhymes. A third mountain had a fountain of scented water at each corner. Beside these fountains reclined four picturesque savages, and on the mountain-top stood a pretty girl in the guise of the fairy-queen. These characters descended, danced, and resumed their places; the fairy then raised her wand and struck the hill. Scores of little doors opened all over it, and out flew a multitude of sparrows. A second stroke released a crowd of rabbits, whose scurrying among the guests occasioned much laughter. A third brought forth a company of singing damsels. And a fourth let loose a troop of howling demons, who executed a number of acrobatic feats, and then ran off with the nymphs. The mountain, in short, was the favourite form of the entremet, and was reproduced year after year in every European court—with endless variety beyond the Channel, but, owing perhaps to our natural love of precedent, rather more monotonously in Britain.

On Twelfth Day, 1518, there was "a pageant" at Bluff Harry's court—a golden mountain, with a golden tree on the top. Out of this mountain issued a lady attended by children of honour, who danced a morrice before the king. When the dance was over, the lady and her train re-entered the mountain, which was then drawn out of the hall. The next time the mountain appeared it carried a beacon, which was watched by the king and five of his knights. The watchers descended and danced before the Queen. Then six ladies emerged from the mountain and danced in their turn, after which knights and dames danced together. This mountain—already patriarchal at the accession of the

Tudors—continued to make its appearance as regularly as Christmas, and in much the same form, for seventy or eighty years more.

The feast with its tissue of entremets was succeeded by the ballet, an entertainment of boundless variety, wherein the actors were the courtiers, and not unfrequently majesty itself. The ballet was not merely a series of picturesque attitudes and graceful evolutions. It always told a story, and that not seldom a complicated one. The subject was sometimes a chivalrous romance, or classic fable; but more frequently a mixture of both, or one of those long-winded allegories which the mediæval brain delighted to spin, and which modern sculpture,—such a thing is taste,—so long delighted to illustrate. The illustrations in flesh and blood, however, were far prettier things than those in bronze and marble. One of these ballets was in five parts—the subject being Fire. The first part represented Prometheus stealing the spark from heaven, and brought out a pretty array of Deities and Titans. In the second part Vulcan and Venus were exhibited forging the bolts of Jove amid a group of Cyclops and Cupids. The third pictured the fall of Phaëton, steeds and chariot of the sun included. The fourth told the love of Semele and its fatal catastrophe. And the fifth closed with Love and Beauty setting the universe on fire between them. Another ballet by six ladies and twelve gentlemen represented the carrying off of nymphs by satyrs. "The fable was so admirably expressed," says the old writer who describes it, "that every one could recognize by their gestures the feelings of the actors. Passion spoke in the movements of the satyrs, and embarrassment and terror in those of the nymphs. Strength and boldness characterized the former; shame and grief the latter. Nothing could be more vivid than the figures of this marvellous pantomime."

By the close of the ballet the excitement of the evening had usually reached its height, and then appeared the mask. This was a group of gentlemen in various grotesque disguises, who burst in among the guests and threw everything into confusion. They roared, romped, teased the ladies, sometimes frightened them, and always brought the mistletoe into ample and active use. There was a great deal of fun in this last of the frolics, and sometimes much fatality. For inebriety, the general failing of the good old times, was sure to be in the ascendant, and accidents happened that, in the period of torches and wooden palaces, more than once involved provinces in mourning. The most memorable of these accidents befel at Paris in 1393. The Christmas holidays were spent, but the riotous appetite of the pleasure-loving court being still unsated, a marriage was improvised between two of the royal attendants as an excuse for prolonging the merriment. A marriage feast in the middle ages was a rough affair at the best, but everything tended to render this one unusually licentious. It was, indeed, an indescribable mixture of high-birth ruffianism, horse-play, and obscenity, in which it was hard to say who was the coarser—the King of France at the head of his court, or the King of the Ribalds at the tail of his crew. Of the two the former probably

bore away the palm ; for all through that disorderly day and still more disorderly night, he had a man at his elbow than whom there was none in Europe more prolific of unseemly devices. This was Sir Hugonin de Guisay, the idol of the reckless, the aversion of the orderly, and the detestation of the populace. And not without good reason. He delighted to exercise his wicked wit on tradesmen and mechanics, treating those he encountered in his walks as the Mohocks of a former generation were accustomed to treat their victims, pricking them with his spurs, and compelling them to creep on all fours and bark like dogs before he let them go. Towards midnight, when all were half mad with wine, De Guisay suggested a mask. These things, rough as they were, were usually prearranged. Everybody knew when to look for the maskers, and, in most instances, who they were. But the marriage had been too hasty for this ; nobody now expected anything of the kind ; and the King took the hint all the more eagerly. He retired, unobserved by the crowd, with De Guisay and four other wild ones—scions all of the noblest houses in France. The projector of mischief had a quantity of tow and a pitch-pot in readiness, and the tight dresses of the group were speedily covered with a very good imitation of the shaggy hide of the bear. Masks for the face were always at hand, and thus the travestie was effected in a very few minutes. Five of the gang were then bound together by means of a silken rope cut from the tapestry, and the sixth, the king, led them into the hall, where the thing took amazingly. "Who are they?" was the general cry ; but that, of course, nobody could tell. At this instant entered the wildest of all the wild Dukes of Orleans. Hearing of the superior order of the fun going on at the palace, he had left his own amusements in another quarter, and hurried thither. He found the torch-bearers ranged close along the walls, and the inquisitive company gathered round the maskers. "Who are they?" hiccupped the three-parts intoxicated prince. "We'll soon find that out." And snatching a torch from one of the bearers, he staggered forward. Some gentlemen attempted to stay him, but he was obstinate and quarrelsome, and refused to be restrained, except by main force ; and as this was not to be thought of with a prince of the blood, however fuddled or mischievous, they gave way. The prince lowered his torch to examine the nearest of the maskers. But hand and foot being equally unsteady, he brought the flame in contact with the tow, and the group was instantly in a bright flame. Presence of mind, or common sobriety on the part of spectators or actors, might have averted the results. But there was none of the latter there, and but two instances of the former. The youthful consort of the aged Duke of Berry seized the King, and enveloped him in her ample robe ; thus he was saved. Another of the maskers, the young Lord of Nantouillet, noted for strength and agility, rent the silken rope with a wrench of his strong teeth—pitched himself like a meteor through the next window, and plunging into a cistern in the court, escaped with scarce a scar. As for the other four, they dragged hither and thither through the horrified mob, fighting with each other and

the flame, and uttering the most awful shrieks. Men who had gone unflinching through a hundred fights sickened at the sight, and women fainted by scores. Roused by the uproar, all Paris was soon afoot in wild excitement, and crowded round the palace. A hundred reports were current—that the princes were engaged in deadly strife being the one most credited. At last the flame burnt out, and the four maskers lay a black and writhing heap on the floor. One of them was a mere cinder; a second survived till daybreak; a third died at noon the next day; and the fourth—the contriver of the mask—lived in horrible torments until the third day. “Bark, dog, bark!” yelled the Parisians as his body was borne to the grave.

Wherever there happened to be a choir, a school was maintained for the instruction of the choristers, where they were instructed in music, and the more promising among them prepared for the universities. To stimulate these youths in their studies,—with the hope, as Strype remarks, “that they might one day attain to the real mitre,”—the festival of the boy-bishop was devised. On the eve of St. Nicholas—the patron of school-boys—the election took place. This might have been free on the Continent—especially among the poor-scholars of Germany, who acknowledged little control during lessons, and none at all after,—but in England there is reason to believe that it was conducted much like the election of a real bishop. The boy-bishop then was pretty sure to be the good boy of the school—that is, if he were handsome and well shaped—qualifications even more essential than merit, as appears from the registers of York Cathedral. Every choir was provided with robes for his use, which, as shown by the list preserved in the Northumberland household book, were hardly less magnificent than those of the diocesan himself. They were provided by the founders and patrons, kept in repair at the expense of the parish, and renewed by donation and legacy. Among the records of the churchwardens of Lambeth there are various entries concerning the repair of the boy-bishop's vestments; and Archbishop Rotheram bequeathed his mitre to the college which he founded at Rotheram in 1481. On St. Nicholas's day the boy-bishop went to church in great state. In London he appears to have been mounted, for a statute of Old St. Paul's directs one of the canons of that cathedral to provide him with a quiet horse. Due care, too, was taken to secure him an adequate following. The statutes of St. Paul's School (1518) direct that every Childermas the pupils shall go to St. Paul's to hear the childe-bishop's sermon. They add that “after he be at the high mass, each of them shall offer a penny to the childe-bishop.” His demeanour at church is thus described by Cyrus de Thuard, Bishop of Châlons, who abolished the festival in his diocese:—“This fine pontiff placed himself in the bishop's throne during the office of the day, surrounded by his boyish chapter. He and they performed the parts of bishop and canons; while the real canons took the places of the children, and acted in all respects up to the character.” The boy-bishop went through all the ceremonies of the day, and even sang the mass. This is

denied, but there is abundance of proof. The records of Noyon say that he went through the *whole* service; the proclamation of Henry VIII., suppressing the boy-bishop, states that he said mass; he was permitted to do so by the statutes of Winchester College, and he was *ordered* to do it by those of Eton. Nobody, however, denies the fact of his preaching. "Suffer little children to come unto me," was always the text; and the discourse, evidently as much a portion of the properties as the crosier or mitre, was repeated year after year, and was just a moral lecture to children, and nothing more. After service the boy-bishop and his followers, assisted by a hired train of mountebanks and minstrels, promenaded the district in search of contributions. They sang gay songs, and indulged in laughter-moving antics, and returned to a feast provided by the churchwardens. The boy-bishop had two privileges: he could—and once, at Cambray, really did—fill up a vacancy occurring in the chapter during his term of office. And did he die during the same period, he was buried with all the pomp of a real bishop, as in the noted case at Salisbury. Boys were not the only actors in these odd ceremonies. They were got up, though not perhaps very generally, among the girls attending the conventual schools. This is stated in the proclamation of 1542. Grosteste, Bishop of Lincoln, also forbade the practice in his diocese at an earlier period; and Archbishop Peckham, writing to the nuns of Godstowe in 1278, enjoins that "public prayers be no longer said in church on St. Catharine's day by little girls."

The boy-bishop of the choir was a tame performance compared with that of the university. In the hands of the students the ceremonies of the day were anything rather than a mild imitation of the original rites. Wild burlesque, wilder fun, and reckless mischief characterized their proceedings. The service was uproar, and the sermon generally an audacious libel on existing authorities. They left the church to play, for the delectation of the mob, such a farce as only mediæval students could write or enact. This closed the short day, and then followed a torchlight procession through the streets, accompanied by a horrible tintamarre and all sorts of indescribable freaks; and generally closing in a conflict with the watch. So it happened in Paris on the eve of St. Nicholas, 1365. There was a formidable riot; but the peace-preservers being the stronger, the students were put to flight and hotly chased to the schools in the Rue de la Bucherie. Not content with their victory, the sergeants forced the gates and carried off numerous prisoners, whom they immured forthwith in the Châtelet. This was a palpable infringement of clerical privilege, and so these sergeants found it. Next day the captives were released with many apologies, and the captors locked up in their stead. The collegiate authorities were satisfied, but not so the students, who determined to take vengeance with their own hands on the first favourable opportunity. Such a one did not offer the next year. In 1367, however, the students obtained what they desired. After a stout fight, in which one or two were killed and many wounded,

among them the bishop, the watch was defeated, and the streets abandoned for the rest of the night to the students. This drew down the interference of the Parliament, which commissioned the commander of the watch to examine the wounded bishop as to the ringleaders in the riot. The Chevalier du Guet obeyed, and visited the Quartier Latin with a strong guard at his back. But it was not quite strong enough. Hardly had he entered the house where lay the wounded bishop than the doors were banged too, and himself and his men assailed by a formidable body of students, well thrashed, disarmed, stripped of their nether garments, and driven with ignominy out of the Quartier. The Parliament was furious, but there was no getting at the perpetrators of the outrage. So, determined that somebody should be punished, it sentenced all those who had taken part in the procession to traverse Paris in much the same plight as that in which the watch had so recently appeared. This the students did; and having made the *amende honorable* in the presence of the king, the magistrates, and the heads of the university, the perpetrators of the outrage were pardoned by proclamation, and admonished not to do the like again; but with very small effect.

The procession of the boy-bishop was prohibited by numerous councils, and obstinately warred with by monarchs and magistrates. It held its ground, however, as staunchly as the plague itself, until the general purification of opinion, and then it vanished like a mist.

The Revelry of the Clergy, or the Feast of Fools, was, beyond question, the perfection of Christmas frolic. This festival was invented, according to some, to wean the people from heathen observances, but in the opinion of the doctors of the Sorbonne, "that the folly which is natural to, and born with us, might exhale at least once a year." It was marked in the Calendar: *Festum Fatuorum in Epiphania, et ejus Octavia*. The learned entertained different views concerning its propriety. From some it met with unqualified approval, from others as unreserved reprobation. A Flemish divine declared in full council at Auxerre, that this festival was quite as acceptable to God as that of the Immaculate Conception, and met with much applause from his brethren. Thereupon Gerson, the most noted theologian of his day, stood up and asserted, amid equal approval, that "if all the devils in hell had put their heads together to devise a feast that should utterly scandalize Christianity, they could not have improved upon this one." And, whatever the fact might have been in his own times, Gerson's opinion is now undisputed. Thiers—not the historian of the Empire, but an ecclesiastic of the seventeenth century, great in most kinds of useless knowledge, and, therefore, well read about the Feast of Fools—says that this festival deserved to be called *La Fête du Diable*, and nearly all antiquaries say much the same. When the Feast of Fools began to be observed by the Christian clergy, it is impossible to tell. The period, however, was sufficiently early. Glimpses of it, or something very like it, are to be caught from time to time in the darkest ages. At Beauvais, for instance, in the year 500, a monkish writer shows

the clergy outside the church-doors on Christmas Day drinking wine out of pitchers, and exchanging witticisms and practical jokes with the passengers. A law of King Childebert's, dated 554 or thereabouts, forbids "the disorders that are perpetrated during the night of the eve of feasts, even those of Easter and Christmas, occasions when nothing is thought of but singing, drinking, and other debaucheries." Gregory of Tours mentions that in his time the *nuns* of Poitiers were peculiarly notorious for keeping these revels. And three centuries later, in 867, we find the Council of Constantinople proscribing similar observances among the Eastern clergy. If we are to credit Cedrenus, who wrote early in the eleventh century, it was the Patriarch Theophylact who first legalized these practices, A.D. 990. "Theophylact," says Cedrenus, "introduced" (that is, authorised and, probably, regulated) "the practice which prevails to this day of scandalizing God and the memory of his saints on the most splendid and popular festivals, by indecent and ridiculous songs and enormous shoutings, even in the midst of these sacred hymns which we ought to offer to the Divine Grace with compunction of heart for the salvation of our souls. But he, collecting a company of base fellows, and placing over them one Euthymius, surnamed Casnes, whom he also appointed superintendent of his church, admitted into the sacred service diabolical dances, exclamations of ribaldry, and ballads borrowed from the streets and vilest haunts." Whether it be as Cedrenus says or not, it is certain that, early in the eleventh century, the Feast of Fools was universally observed.

But it was observed with a great deal of variety. It seems to have been confined to the cathedrals, the collegiate churches, and the great monasteries. As to the parish churches and smaller convents, these, as we shall see, had an equivalent in such festivals as that of the Ass. Where the clergy were few the revels were simple; but when they happened to be numerous the ceremonies became more complicated. In this case the inferior clerks—the deacons and sub-deacons—had one feast, and the full-fledged priests another; nearly every locality also observed some peculiarity in the rites. These began with the election of the chief or chiefs, who were variously termed abbots, bishops, or popes of fools, cornards, or esclaffards. And there was quite as much variety in the period of election as in the title. At Viviers it took place on the 17th of December; in our own universities on the 21st; at Rome on the 10th of November; among the German students on Twelfth Day; and at Rheims on the 18th of July. In the last instance a carpet was spread and forms were arranged under a great elm-tree in front of the cathedral. There the whole chapter assembled, and elected the Abbot of Fools with as much gravity, debate, and intrigue as goes towards the appointment of more serious potentates. Immediately after the election the bells were set ringing—how, will be shown by the following incident, which occurred at Evreux in the days of King Stephen. Seeing that the deacons, who superseded the regular ringers on these occasions, had no purpose except

to make as much clamour as possible, and therefore rang so furiously as to damage bells and belfry, besides injuring and sometimes killing one another, the bishop prohibited this part of the performance. He did more. Having a shrewd notion that a mere prohibition would have little effect, he placed the legitimate ringers in the belfry, armed them with stout staves, and directed them to keep the place against all comers. The deacons, indignant at this unwarrantable interference with their admitted rights, and determined, so far as they could, to stand strictly on "the old lines of the constitution," laid vigorous siege to the belfry. The defence was creditable to the garrison, and several tansured crowns were neatly cracked. Some of the assailants, however, clambering over the cathedral roof, while others broke down the door, the belfry was stormed at all points. The bishop's men, being mastered, were deprived of the keys, well cuffed, and then thrust out. The ringing that ensued was something awful. It was enough to make even a bishop indulge in strong language; and this one did not refrain. "Heavens!" exclaimed he, clapping his hands to his ears, "will nobody stop those infernal deacons?" Such an interjection was never uttered in vain by a man of rank in those days, and hardly had the bishop spoken when two of his gravest canons, Walter Deutelin and John Mansel, started off to the scene of action, with the view of reducing the uproar to some sort of moderation. This was not a judicious proceeding. In somewhere about seven minutes the bishop saw his dutiful canons swinging in the wind from the top of the belfry, about 200 feet from the ground. In each instance, indeed, the rope was passed under the arms, which was not quite so bad as if it had been knotted round the neck. Still, the situation was not an agreeable one. It is not pleasant to swing at such a height, even when the cord is thoroughly trustworthy. But here this was hardly the fact. The canons were exceedingly canonical in their proportions, and the ropes were neither new nor particularly strong. But interference was useless. So the canons retained their precarious position, and "hung and swung in the sight of men," and of a good many women and boys, too, until the diaconal idea of vengeance was satisfied. This, however, did not occur until three-fourths of the bells and several of the ringers had been reduced to the condition of Professor Puzzle's mouse-trap, that is, rendered *hors de combat*.*

The bell-ringing duly achieved, the Abbot of Fools was raised on the shoulders of his flock, who, chanting the *Te Deum* as they went, carried him in triumph to the chapter-house, where the rest of the chapter was assembled. Everybody, including the bishop, rose at his entrance, and did him reverence. Afterwards, all sat down to a feast, which was opened with a mock grace and closed with a burlesque hymn. The new abbot

* "If you please, sir," said the housemaid, "the trap won't catch no mice."
"Why, Mary," pronounced the professor, after grave examination of the machine;
"it is hors de combat!" "Oh," said Mary, "is that all? I thought it was broke."

was then mounted on an ass, with his face to the tail, and led in procession through the town, distributing ridiculous blessings among the people; and this portion of the ceremony was repeated every evening until the holidays closed.

The bishop or archbishop of fools—according to the dignity of the see—was elected by the clergymen in full orders, and installed in office with appropriate ceremonies. The whole chapter being gathered in the cathedral, he was clad in the bishop's robes and seated in the episcopal throne with all the usual honours. The service of the day was then chanted. At its close the almoner of fools called out "Silence, keep silence;" the choir replied, "Thank God." Then the bishop recited a comic benediction, and the almoner distributed equally comic indulgences—to some toothache or gout, to others liberty to drink when they were thirsty, and so forth.

In the numerous privileged chapels—those that acknowledged no superiors but his Holiness—the ruler of the frolics took the title of pope of fools, and was installed with a burlesque of the rites employed in the consecration of his prototype.

All these proceedings were merely introductory. The fête itself took place on Christmas Day, the 1st of January, Innocents' Day, or the Epiphany, which last was known in many quarters as "the excellent fête de fools." When there happened to be an abbot and a bishop of fools in the same place, it was often the custom to hold separate revels. But in the majority of instances the priest and deacons coalesced after the investiture of their respective chiefs. When the long-expected morning came, the clergy put on their best robes, and accompanied the bishop, the latter in full canonicals, to church, where his entrance was marked by a grand peal of the bells, and the most thunderous tones of the organ. He was then seated in the episcopal throne, and high mass commenced. At this point, all those who were not absolutely required to carry on the service stole out to change their robes. They soon reappeared grotesquely painted and masked, and accompanied by the more notorious of the rollicking blades of the neighbourhood in similar attire: some being dressed as jugglers, others like women, and others again like wild beasts or demons. Then—the service still going on—the maskers began their tricks. They threw summersaults, played all sorts of school-boy games, and made every conceivable noise. They placed a lighted stove on the altar, and roasted sausages at it; they sat down beside it and played at dice; they sang very profane songs; they burnt old shoes in the censers and held them under the nose of the officiating priest; they bedaubed and blackened his face, they threw coals at one another, and among the people; they shouted "strange oaths;" they even quarrelled and fought in downright earnest. And they closed the service with this singular performance: Half-a-dozen or more of them assuming lunacy, threw off every article of clothing, and were pursued round and round the church, inside and out, by their yelling comrades, who drenched them with water,

and everybody else who chanced to be looking on. A council held towards the close of the fifteenth century endeavoured to reform at least this portion of the fête. With this purpose it sagely enacted that naked men were no more to be hunted through the church on Christmas morning, but *only* through the cloisters; and that water alone was to be thrown at them, and *not* the buckets too.

Outside the church a scaffold was erected. This was brought into requisition immediately after the service, for the exhibition of a "farce." The farce, as we learn from the registers of the Church of St. Stephen, at Dijon, under the date of 1494, was always opened with a scene greatly in favour with the mob—the shaving of the precentor. He was an official who had charge of the choir; and, as Fosbrooke says, "was empowered to tug the ears and pull the hair of the boys, and thump the deacons and sub-deacons who told lies, or otherwise misconducted themselves." Generally speaking, he was a tyrant, a sort of mediæval Squeers; and when his victims had the shaving of him, they did it in perfection—not sparing him a single rasp or bucket of water. Indeed the same council that issued those judicious regulations respecting the nudities on Christmas morning, endeavoured in like manner to place limits to the torture of the precentor, forbidding his barbers to use more than three tubs of water in the operation. But of course their decrees were as little regarded in this instance as in the other, and the shaving went on pretty much as with seamen who cross the line for the first time. Indeed the ceremonies are so much alike, that we incline to think the marine romp derived from the monkish one. There was the same monstrous razor and disagreeable lather, and the same infinity of drenching—not a little of which fell to the lot of the crowd that grinned below. The farce that followed was always very satirical, still more personal, and excessively gross. It formed, indeed, a constant cause of bickering between the actors and the authorities, and was prohibited times without number. But being one of those things that education alone can put down, it defied magisterial interference to the very last.

The farce was followed by a procession—and such a procession! That of Silenus was nothing to it. There were musical instruments of all sorts: drums, old pots, trumpets, cowhorns, everything that could be made to emit a sound, and the harsher the better. All the mud-carts, well laden, were there, as well as numerous donkeys in fantastic harness, and one or two caravans hired for the purpose from travelling showmen. Mounted on these went the reverend gentlemen, in suitable attire. They promenaded the streets for hours, attended by a numerous crowd, and saluted everywhere with roars of laughter and showers of unsavoury missiles, which, especially the latter, they richly merited. Some of them blessed the spectators in language that sounded exceedingly like cursing; others bespattered them with mud; those on the donkeys treated them to comic songs; and those in the caravans with tumbling and tableaux-vivants that an English pen cannot describe, except as

infamous. Symbols and ornaments appeared in these processions, identical with those used in the pagan mysteries. Most of them have disappeared, chiefly during the turmoil of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. A few specimens still remain in the possession of the curious. These, however, are diminishing daily, because even the antiquarian mania cannot always restrain the destroying hand of disgust. How came they into the hands of the Christian clergy? The question is suggestive. But hardly as suggestive as these facts. The Feast of Fools was vigorously and persistently opposed by the heads of the mediæval church. It was prohibited by bishop after bishop, and anathematized by council after council—the edicts levelled at it counting by hundreds, and dating from early in the twelfth century up to the sixteenth century. But quite in vain. It proved ineradicable from among the clergy; nay, it rather appeared to gather strength. And, strange as it may seem, it was widely prevalent among the nuns, who observed it with nearly as much licence, and adhered to it with equal obstinacy. And yet to-day it has vanished almost from memory. Which is the better—folly or schism, licentiousness or liberty? The choice must be made; where the latter is prohibited the former is sure to flourish in the rankest luxuriance.

The Abbot of Unreason, our English equivalent for the bishop of fools, was a much inferior personage. There was plenty of fun and horse-play exhibited under his rule, and occasionally some rough satire. But there was little or nothing of the audacious profanity and licentiousness that characterized the reign of the foreign potentate. A statute of Henry III., forbidding clergymen to play at dice at church, shows that—favoured probably by his French minions—the continental method of observing Christmas had made some progress in his day among our countrymen. The enactment, however, was not afterwards repeated; nor does it appear to have been required. From that time, at least, the Abbot of Unreason in Britain was seldom or never a clergyman. There was, indeed, such a personage attached to every cathedral and monastery, as well as to each municipality and baronial hall. He was, however, a lay servant or retainer; for, except in the case of the boy-bishop, his masters took no prominent part in the revels. The terms, therefore, Lord of Misrule and Abbot of Unreason were with us convertible. As to the office, it was not generally filled by election. At Court some poetasting knight or gentleman was nominated to it by the monarch or leading minister; in the country, it was filled by some younger brother or hanger-on; and at the universities a master of arts—a grave and reverend seignior, much more likely to restrain than to animate them—was appointed by the heads of the colleges to regulate the games. It was different among the people; but we must let Master Stubbs, the Puritan, speak on this point:—"All the wild heads of the parish, flocking together, choose them a grand captain of mischief, whom they ennoble with the title of Lord of Misrule; and him they crown with great solemnity, and adopt for their king. This king, anointed, chooseth four-and-twenty, forty, threescore, or a hundred

like himself, to wait upon his lordly majesty, and to guard his noble person. Then every one of these men he investeth with his liveries of green, and yellow, or some other light wanton colour; and as though they were not gaudy enough, they bedeck themselves with scarves, ribbons, and laces, hung all over with gold rings, precious stones, and other jewels. This done, they tie about either leg twenty or forty bells, with rich handkerchiefs in their hands, and sometimes laid across their shoulders and necks. Then have they their hobby-horses, their dragons, and other antics, together with their bawdy pipes and thundering drummers to strike the devil's dance withal. Then march this heathenish company towards the church, their pipes piping, their drums thundering, their bells jingling, their handkerchiefs fluttering about their heads like madmen, their hobby-horses and other monsters skirmishing among the throng. And in this sort they go to the church, though the minister be at prayer or preaching—dancing and singing with such a confused noise that no man can hear his own voice. And thus these terrestrial furies spend the Sabbath day. Then they have certain papers wherein is painted some babelerie or other of imagery work, and these they call my Lord of Misrule's badges or cognizances. These they give to every one that will give them money to maintain them in their heathenish devilry. And who will not shew himself buxom to them and give them money, he shall be mocked and flouted shamefully. Yea, and many times carried on a cow-staff and dived over head and ears in water, or otherwise most horribly abused." We strongly suspect Master Stubbs, like Juvenal, had a sneaking kindness for the abuses he so racily describes. However that may be, he certainly does not exaggerate with respect to the treatment in store for those who did not show themselves "buxom" to the revellers and their chief, as a certain apparitor attached to the archiepiscopal court of St. Andrew's once proved to his sorrow. This officer, with rare audacity, ventured to serve letters of excommunication issued against the Lord of Borthwick, while the inmates of the castle were celebrating Christmas, and met with the fate of many an Irish "process-server" in the good old days when Irishmen were more like themselves than they are now, and preferred a frolicsome vengeance any day in the week to a fatal one. Having discharged his duty, the apparitor was seized by the Abbot of Unreason and his crew, taken to the mill-stream and thoroughly well ducked. He was then compelled to eat his letters of excommunication to the last shred, and dismissed with the warning that all similar documents "should gang the same gate." Nor was Stubbs less correct in the other portions of his vivid account, as the following passage attests: "In 1440 one Captain John Gladman, a man ever true and faithful to God and the King, and constantly sportive, made public disport with his neighbours at Christmas. He traversed the town on a horse as gaudily caparisoned as himself, preceded by the twelve months, each dressed in character. After him crept the pale attenuated figure of Lent, clothed in herring-skins, and mounted on a sorry horse, whose harness was

covered with oyster-shells. A train fantastically garbed followed. Some were clothed as bears, apes, and wolves; others were tricked out in armour; a number appeared as harridans with blackened faces and tattered clothes; and all kept up a promiscuous fight. Last of all marched several carts, whereon a number of fellows dressed as old fools sat upon nests and pretended to hatch young fools."

In parish churches, and wherever the clergy were not sufficiently numerous to conduct the Christmas revels themselves, they united for the purpose with the people. In these cases there was much sameness in the proceedings. The Flemings, for instance, repeated the Feast of Noël year after year, and from one end of the country to the other, with little or no variation. And the French country parsons and their rustic flocks reproduced the Feast of the Ass with just as much servility.

The Feast of Noël was celebrated by a procession that started from the church-door, made the circuit of the parish, and ended where it began. In front marched the curés and choristers, bearing crosses, banners, and relics, and occasionally singing anthems. After them came a young girl representing the Virgin, and a young man rather lightly clad and ornamented with a pair of wings as the angel Gabriel. Then followed a cardboard cock with a child inside. This was succeeded by a cow, a goat, four sheep, and an ass, or rather, by models of these animals, each containing a boy. A fool mounted on a hobby-horse and provided with bells and bauble closed the array. Every now and then the procession halted. The angel recited the salutation and kissed his companion, who said, "Fiat".* —"So be it." Then, one after another, the cock crew the words "*Puer natus est nobis*,"—"Unto us a child is born;" the cow lowed, "*Ubi?*"—"Where?"—the sheep maaed, "Bethlem;" and the ass brayed, "He-haw-mus"—to signify *Eamus*—"Let us go thither." And then, as the goats and the fool had nothing in particular to add, the procession moved on, until the next halting-place was reached, when the performance was repeated.

The Feast of the Ass was very similar, but rather more pretentious, and, perhaps from some mystic sympathy between the hero and his worshippers, much more widely spread. Authorities were not quite agreed as to what particular ass was to be honoured in this feast. Nor was this to be wondered at, considering the variety from which they had to choose. There were Balaam's, Abigail's, the Shunamite's, and a hundred other scriptural and very estimable asses; to say nothing of the unscriptural, but none the less wonderful, beast of Zedekias the Jew, which had reproved the unbelief of his master by falling prostrate in the mud before the host. And few of these animals could complain of neglect. But decidedly the favourites were the beast used in the flight from Egypt and the one bestriden by Balaam. The former, known as the Holy Ass, was said to have crossed the seas dryshod to Italy. Dying there, its bones were long preserved in an artificial ass, under the guardianship

* A friend at our elbow prefers to render this, "Do it again."

of four canons, who, of course, took care to parade the relics in the view of the faithful as often as possible. The feast originated, then, in Italy, but it was speedily domiciled in France, where—especially during the residence of the Popes at Avignon—it obtained much greater respect than on its native soil, and where, surviving most other mediæval matters of the sort, it was observed at Bourges so late as 1682. Bourges, indeed, was one of its principal seats, the people of that town being so infatuated with the Holy Ass that they adopted it for the city arms, where it figured for many a day, seated like a burgomaster in an easy chair. When the feast was in honour of Balaam's charger, it came off on Christmas Day, as at Rouen and Sens. In the other instance it was deferred until the 14th of January; but there seems to have been little difference in the proceedings—Balaam appearing mounted at the one festival, and afoot at the other, while the rest of the characters remained unaltered. The procession left the church, traversed a certain circuit, and returned to the starting-point. A body of priests and choristers formed the advanced guard. Then came the ass, a wooden model containing a boy. On his back rode Balaam, dressed like an astrologer, or the Virgin, represented by a pretty girl nursing a doll. Behind the principal personage marched a long array of patriarchs and prophets—Moses, with his rod; David, in green, in company with Goliath, who carried a false head; Samson drawing a pasteboard lion; and, last of all, the poet Virgil, along with the Sibyls. There were many halts, during which the prophets chanted versicles and conversed in character, while some of them repeated a characteristic feat: David, for instance, knocking down Goliath, and striking off his head; and Samson fencing with his plaything, and pulling a honeycomb out of his mouth. The crowd entered the church on its return, singing Latin rhymes in praise of the ass and his fête, and he-hawing lustily. The ass and its rider were then placed beside the altar, and the service began—and a very peculiar service it was. That in use at Sens was composed by Peter of Corbeil, who died bishop of the diocese in 1220. The manuscript is still preserved in the cathedral. Its silver binding is covered with grotesques, and its pages are bordered by figures of bacchantes and bacchanals in every attitude. The service consisted of a mass of odd matter, called the "prose of the ass," but mostly rhyme—half Latin, half French—interwoven with the ritual of the day. In it, the first syllable of the hallelujah was always lengthened into he-haw, and every one of the hymns had a suitable refrain, which the priests led off, and the people took up with exceeding heartiness. The service was further enlivened by a good deal of pantomime and broad farce, enacted by the patriarchs. At the close of the rites the following couplet was sung, as the manuscript directs, "*à grosse voix*," by four canons:—

Hæc est clara dies clararum, clara dierum;

Hæc est festa dies festarum, festa dierum.

He-haw, he-haw, he-haw, master ass.

Directly afterwards the deacon, turning towards the people, exclaimed, "Ita missa est—he-haw, he-haw, he-haw-aw-aw," and the people responded, "Deo gratias—he-haw, he-haw-aw-aw," which closed the service. "This feast of the ass was assuredly idolatrous," says an old writer; "and," he adds, with a turn of thought altogether mediæval, "the invention of the devil, that monkey and fool whom God Almighty keeps for his amusement."

Akin to the Feast of the Ass, though hardly so prevalent, was that of the Wise Men. This was observed at Milan, its original seat, in 1336, as follows:—Foremost in the Twelfth-Day procession, mounted on great horses and richly robed, marched the three kings. They were attended by numerous pages and followed by their guards and a great crowd. A tall mast supporting a golden star was borne before them to the pillars of San Lorenzo—sixteen scathed and shattered columns, now supporting nothing, that greatly puzzle the antiquary. Here Herod with his scribes and his wise men awaited them, and the scene described by the Evangelist, with sundry adjuncts not noticed in Scripture, was enacted. From the columns, still being preceded by the star, they adjourned to the ancient Church of Eustorgia. There, in the neighbourhood of the sarcophagus which once contained the relics that Barbarossa carried off to bestow on Cologne, they found what they sought in the manger and duly presented their gifts.

Christmas was not exclusively appropriated to pleasure-seekers and their ministers. Our ancestors were a drug-loving race, and they greatly esteemed the medicines compounded at holy seasons. The apothecary, therefore, was always very busy at Christmas. Then the rhinoceros-horn was powdered into an infallible antidote against poison; mummies were moulded into comfits to be swallowed by those who had met with contusions; and human grease was distilled for the relief of any afflicted with rheumatism. Then, too, as Van Helmont directs, the black goat, having his hind legs tied to his ears, was suspended by the horns from the ceiling of the laboratory and bled in the tail—the slow-falling drops being received in a glass and dried in a furnace as a remedy for pleurisy. And, especially, then was the human skull triturated for the use of the epileptic. But it was not every cranium that could thus be used. The druggists of the Middle Ages were fastidious on this point. No head was permitted to pass through their hands unless it had been bleached on the gibbet for a sufficient period—that is, until the muscular covering had been quite consumed and replaced by a green mould much resembling the moss on the bark of an old oak. Most of these heads, as Pomet tells us, came from Ireland—a country which of old was chiefly known to foreigners as the seat of this ghastly traffic. These, and other repulsive medicines, were considered all the more efficient if the criminal had been executed during the Christmas holidays. Nor were such desiderata at all rare. Indeed, two or three hundred years ago a hanging or a heading ranked with a tournament in attraction, and no fête or festival was thought complete

without several, of which we could give examples almost without end. The spectators gathered to these exhibitions to be excited and amused. Nor were they the only ones who regarded them as a species of comedy. In most instances the criminals entertained the same opinion, and took care to do due honour to their part as principal performers, and to give all satisfaction to the crowd by a bold and even facetious demeanour in the cart and on the scaffold.

Another Christmas amusement much in vogue in the good old times was seeing the devil. "You would not believe how many young gentlemen tease me to show them the fiend between Christmas and Twelfth Night"—said one of the many who professed to manage the exhibition—"and I always gratify them,—for a consideration. A quarter of a league hence there is a capacious souterrain" (probably the catacombs) "with numerous windings. When anybody wants to see the devil I lead him thither. But before I allow him to enter I make him do a few things. He has first to pay his fee, forty-five to fifty pistoles. I then make him swear never to reveal what he may see or hear. Afterwards cautioning him on peril of his life to abstain from mentioning any holy word or name I lead him into the cavern. At the threshold I pause to make sundry fumigations and to pronounce several incantations in choice gibberish. When this is over the curious fool and myself are sure to hear, far down in the darkness, the rattling of chains and the growling of big dogs, neither of them pleasant sounds, considering the hour and the place, and especially our purpose. I then question my employer if he has any fear, informing him, at the same time, that a failure of courage is certain to result in some fearful catastrophe. In most cases the reply is in the affirmative, and I lead my gentleman out of the cave, reprimand him severely on account of his impertinent curiosity, and—keep his money. If, however, he declares that he is not afraid—as a few do—I lead him slowly forward, muttering many frightful words as we go along. Having reached a certain spot I redouble my invocations and work myself up into quite a fury. At the proper time six men dressed like fiends, whom I have previously concealed in the place, jump up from a hole, throw a shower of flaming rosin and fireworks round, and indulge in a satanic dance. By the light of these flames we perceive, close at hand, a monstrous goat fastened with chains, painted vermillion, as if they were red hot, and by his side two mastiffs similarly chained, and having their muzzles fast in wooden pipes shaped like speaking-trumpets. The men prick the animals, which caper and yell. And these yells, reverberating among the caverns, are so horrible, that, well as I know the cause, they often make my own hair stand on end. This goes on for ten minutes or so. Then the furies rush forward to torment my devil-seeker, pinching, kicking, and cuffing him, and thwacking him with sand-bags, until I am compelled to drag him out half dead. Then, the flames and fires having disappeared, and the horrible cries ceased, my employer gradually recovers his spirits. I take

advantage of this to show him what a dangerous and useless curiosity it is to wish to see the devil, and entreat him to abandon it for the future. And this I assure you he never fails to do."

Christmas, like other festive seasons, but more than any other, was a favourite with conspirators. Where treachery existed it seldom failed to prefer the masquerades of Yule for its work. It was then that Chatel attempted the life of Henri Quatre; that the friends of Richard II. plotted to murder Bolingbroke; that Henry III., of France, struck down his arch-enemy Guise; that the Lollards mustered against Henry V.; that the Forest Cantons expelled the Austrians; that Cæsar Borgia trapped and slaughtered the Orsini; and that Fiesco exploded his renowned conspiracy. Christmas, too, was a chosen time with the old warriors for the surprise of towns. They calculated that the garrisons would then keep unusually careless watch, and, generally speaking, they were right; consequently, the mediæval annals teem with stories of ingenious and daring escalades, achieved in the midst of revelry by the Duguesclins, the Douglases, and the Mannys. Most of these were very stirring affairs, and one or two rather singular. Prominent among the latter is this one, which occurred in the South of France, on New Year's eve, 1577. Villefranc and Montpazier were adjacent towns in Périgord. The inhabitants, like those of Dinant and Liege, and many other neighbours in the good old times, hated one another devoutly. How the feud arose was unknown, as was the time when, but certainly it had not lost strength by the lapse of ages. In the religious wars Montpazier took one side and Villefranc, of course, took the other. There resulted much mutual insult, a good deal of robbing, a little murder, and occasionally, but not often, some fighting. At length, when warm with Christmas cheer, and ready for any mischief, the merry men of Villefranc bethought them of their neighbours at Montpazier, and took it into their heads to make them a very early New Year's call. Accordingly, sending their wives and children to bed, they set out about ten o'clock at night, on the 31st of January, and reached Montpazier in a couple of hours. Not a sentinel was to be seen: so they scaled the walls without being discovered. The place was profoundly quiet, and, strange to say, the visitors found nobody but non-combatants in it. There was no resistance, and therefore no slaughter, but there was plenty of mischief of other sorts. Towards daybreak the plunderers left the town, with its women weeping and its children howling, and their own shoulders tolerably well laden. They marched home without accident through a dense New Year's fog; but when they entered Villefranc they verily believed that they had been travelling in a circle, and had got back again to Montpazier. The scene upon which they entered was precisely identical with the one they had left. Here, as there, the drawbridge was down, the gate wide open, and the place strewn with torn garments and broken furniture. They were soon, however, enlightened as to their whereabouts and the meaning

of the confusion when their screaming children and exasperated dames rushed out, but not exactly to bless their triumphant return. It then appeared that the men of Montpazier had formed the same idea as themselves, and had realized it with as much success. The feelings of the heroes may be fancied. Seeing no particular advantage in this kind of warfare the rival towns made peace, restored the plunder, forgot the other injuries which about balanced one another, and determined to go no more a-roving so late on New Year's eve.

A vision rises before our mind's eye. Wavy and unsubstantial as a drifting cloud, it seems for a moment to assume consistence. It is the interior of a vast cathedral—above, dimly lighted and hung with dreamy banners; and below, thronged with splendid shadows: princes and ambassadors, cardinals and nobles, bishops and knights. The oceanic boom of the organ ceases. There is a pin-drop silence. A stately phantom, crowned and robed by the altar, attracts all eyes. The scene takes life, the faces assume individuality—Gerson, Hallam, D'Ailly here—proud electors and prouder patriarchs there—and yonder Sigismund. We recognize the Council of Constance, and the German monarch exercising an old imperial right to read one of the lessons of the day. Then figures, banners, and pillars melt into a shapeless mist that disappears in the depths of the past. It is our last glimpse of Christmas in the days of old.

Shamrockiana.

CHAPTER II.

THE PRE-UNIONISTS.

THE Parliamentary life of Ireland, in so far as regards those oratorical displays which formed its most brilliant ornament, has had a brief history.

If we look back to the time which preceded George III., we shall find little to interest in the debates, and even less to admire. The King's Government was carried on without any impediment from an organized opposition, nor had the House fashioned itself into those forms of party which in our own day have so distinctly marked out the contending armies of politics. The Irish Parliament presented the spectacle of a mere council, in which the acts of the Government were ratified, and wherein the few dissentients to English rule were classed amongst that impracticable people who were assumed to represent a very uncultivated and scarcely civilized nation.

If we turn to the newspapers of the time, a very few and unsatisfactory lines are all that we find to denote a debate, nor do we chance upon a single name which has served to relieve by its brilliancy the long gloomy night of hopeless inaction that prevailed over Ireland. The oratory of the House, in such specimens as have reached us, was poor, commonplace, and weak. There was no preparation, and as little was there of that spontaneous eloquence which so mainly contributed to illustrate the debates of a later period. In fact, if we see little that denotes a high intellectual standard of the time, we see just as little of those traits and characteristics which we like to deem national.

Burke called the debates of Walpole's day "parochial discussions," and the lowering epithet might with full truth be applied to those deliberations, whose subjects were some petty local matter, undignified by any bearing upon the real condition of the country, and unadorned by even a passing gleam of statesmanship or political knowledge.

A coarse slipshod style, disfigured by occasional tawdry illustration, was the recognized habit of the House: the tone of the parish vestry, dashed with the exercise of the schoolboy. And so generally accepted was this, that many thought public business could not be conducted in any other fashion, and that a manner which it would be libellous to call conversational was the appropriate method to discuss any question of public interest.

The first innovator upon this dreary habit was Single-speech Hamilton, who came over to Ireland as secretary to Lord Halifax. His polished periods and finished oratory bore every trace of care and preparation, and still more strongly evidenced the fact that he possessed Edmund Burke as his private secretary. He had, with all the clearness of close reasoning and accurate logic, a copious flow of language, admirably relieved by illustration, and occasionally rising to the highest flight of poetical imagery.

The example could not be long without followers, and John Hely Hutchinson soon distinguished himself by a character of eloquence, of which the debates had long been barren. He was a man of a very high order of ability, and yet he was one who availed himself more in public life of a consummate knowledge of society, an intense social tact, than was the habit of the day to employ. As Hardy says of him, he saw what the House would bear, and never went beyond it; and, like an accomplished Minister of a recent day, he had an almost instinctive appreciation of the opportune moment—of the temper of his contemporaries, and of those passing moods of impetuosity or dogged caution which beset large assemblies of men.

His command of wit, especially sarcastic wit, was considerable, but so restrained by self-command,—so checked by an assumed deference for the House—that in reality a licence was allowed to him very rarely accorded to others.

It is no light praise of him to say that in his personal contests with Flood he is supposed to have had the advantage—at least, the gay and sportive style of his replies, the unfailing readiness of his epigram, and the neatness of his sarcasm, were well suited to the conventional temper of the day, and where Flood displayed the stern and almost gloomy recesses of a capacious mind, Hutchinson's playful ease and graceful imagery carried the day in his favour. In Hamilton's words, "He was a craft for all weathers."

It was no detraction to his merits, before an Irish audience, that there was a theatrical air in his oratory. Indeed, his friendship for Quin, and his love of the stage, tintured the whole character of his mind, and imparted a something of dramatic effect to all his displays in public. He left the Opposition for a Prime Sergeancy in 1766, and subsequently became Provost of Trinity College,—a step which closed against him all the rewards of his own profession, and prematurely completed a career that might have led to the highest honours.

A number of capable and very gifted men now suddenly burst forth before the public eye. It seemed as though the dormant intelligence of the land but needed one spark of genius to kindle and quicken it into life. Amongst them—I take them at random—were Andrews, Perry, Malone, Cox, Fitzgerald, the Knight of Kerry, admirable debaters, who would have won honour and distinction in any assembly of Europe. The fashion of the day required that men of fortune should be educated for the Bar,

which thus imparted an accuracy of reasoning and a careful precision of expression to minds cultivated in every branch of polite literature, and avowedly pre-eminent in all the graceful accomplishments of foreign travel.

It is no vain boast to declare that the Irish gentleman of that day was the most finished type of "gentleman" to be found in Europe. There were blended with all the required advantages of a most refined education certain traits of race, certain national characteristics, which served to set off these accomplishments: light and joyous temperaments, chastened by the most courtly good breeding, daring courage, and sportive ease, chivalrous devotion to ladies, coupled with an almost reckless intrepidity, and a sense of honour only too punctilious in its exactions. All these met in a society where scholarship was prized, and conversational excellence valued, and where to be distinguished was to be regarded as the winner of a great reward. There was nothing gladiatorial in the display where all were athletes, and with those gifts which would make one man now-a-days sought after and courted, society at large was so imbued, that personal pre-eminence was hardly possible.

A number of names rise to my memory at this moment, not one of whom would not well serve to illustrate the character I have claimed for that age. Hussey Burgh, for instance, a man of the most cultivated mind, with that easy eloquence which intercourse with the world confers upon men of refinement; he could enliven the dullest subject by his wit, and interest the coldest by the impassioned flow of his eloquence.

Scarcely anything of his, however, has come down to us; and yet we would willingly know more of him who, alluding to some coercive laws of England with reference to the Volunteers, said, "Such laws are sown as dragons' teeth, and arise armed men."

The reporters of those days were unhappily very unfit for their calling, and we find in a debate on the Mutiny Bill, when Burgh quoted an opinion of Sergeant Maynard, he is represented in the paper of the next morning as having appositely introduced a saying of an eminent Sergeant-Major!

It would not be easy to conceive anything drearier than the columns of an Irish newspaper of that day. There is one feature, however, in which they bear a most unhappy resemblance to the journals of our own time—the record of outrage and violence is the same. Then, as now, the tenure of land was the source of endless strife and contention; not, however, that resistance to law had taken the form of an organized system as now we see it. It was rather that a general lawlessness prevailed in every condition of life. In the upper classes there was duelling, great extravagance in living, and exaggerated notions on the score of honour. In the humbler ranks general improvidence, indolence, and a reckless indifference to consequences, which led them to hold life cheaply, and to risk it freely on very slight provocation.

It is not easy to conceive a state of society which combined and actually brought into close contact traits of character and habits so totally unlike, and even contradictory, high intellectual culture, polished manners,

chivalrous devotion to women, and scrupulous regard for personal honour, with riotous living, unbridled libertinism, organized clubs for abduction, and incessant quarrels on most frivolous pretexts; and it was thus that the vices of the gentry "run to seed" had scattered a baneful crop throughout the land, and the peasant had learned to imitate after his own fashion the insubordinate ways and opinions of the landlord.

Sir Jonah Barrington is not the sort of witness one would place on the table to sustain a question whose accuracy we would uphold. His memoirs, however, have a truthfulness perfectly distinct from their reference to individual fact. The light they throw, the colour they impart to the picture of Ireland is correct. The strange jumble of all that was courteous, kind, generous, and self-devoted, with a great deal that was semi-barbarous, coarse, thoughtless, and undignified, was to be found at the close of the last century. Rank imposed no restrictions upon unseemly conduct, and station involved no obligations as to behaviour before the world. There was no curb upon personal eccentricity, but rather a popular voice in its favour; and the man who engaged himself in some absurd wager, or accomplished some hazardous but good-for-nothing feat, was sure of an enthusiastic popularity.

There was a total absence of all seriousness in every condition of life. It would seem as if no one imagined himself engaged in any other than a light and playful occupation, and thus not only the Bar, the Bench, but even the Bishops, made their jokes, and capped their epigrams on events which in any other land would have been treated with all the solemn dignity of deep importance.

Whatever claims a man's public life may have had upon him, however so great the responsibilities of his station, or the calls of duty, the demands of conversation superseded them all, and the repute of a clever conversor or a brilliant narrator was a more coveted ambition than of almost any other success. Some of this grew out of the nature of the national temperament, which disposed men to value those displays of very varied and almost contradictory qualities, but a great deal more came out of the growing conviction that Ireland's days as a nation were numbered, that her life as a province was about to begin, and that no high rewards would any longer befall those who linked their fortunes with the falling country; and, like the crew of a sinking ship, they abandoned themselves to the orgie of despair—to stifle the cries of their agony, they raised the wilder shouts of debauch.

It was to this sentiment, disorganizing all sense of public honour and private shame, deadening men to the opinion of the world, and demoralizing the very heart of the nation, that Lord Castlereagh owed all his success in that wholesale and unblushing corruption by which he bought the Act of Union. He first taught men to despair of the craft, before he began to bargain with them for the sale of the wreck. The Irish Parliament was discredited before it was put up to sale!

To the reckless levity of the higher classes and the hopeless barbarism

of the people, the "*bourgeoisie*" opposed a spirit, which, if not always guided by absolute wisdom, still strongly evidenced their sense of patriotism. A meeting was held in Dublin of the freemen and freeholders, over which the high sheriff presided, in which a resolution was passed, "That until the grievances of this country be removed"—and the grievances alluded to were entirely those of a commercial character—"we pledge ourselves neither to import nor consume any of the manufactures of Great Britain, nor will we deal with any merchant or shopkeeper who shall import such manufactures; and that we recommend the adoption of this course to all our countrymen who regard the welfare or commerce of Ireland." The bold defiance of this challenge, and the establishment of the Volunteers—a force which in its equipment of cavalry, artillery, and infantry, constituted a perfect army—alarmed the Government of England to that extent that the Act of Union became determined on, and the only question remained as to the mode by which it was to be effected.

These Volunteers were a very remarkable force. Raised ostensibly for defence against invasion, they constituted, in reality, a great national army, and scarcely a man of independent position in the land did not belong to that body. They accepted no commission from the Crown, nor any direct connection with the Government. They named their own officers, accepted no pay, and until their numbers and extension rendered private effort unequal to the charge, provided their own arms. Not very willing, indeed, to arm men who avowed such sturdy independence, the Government ultimately accorded them 70,000 stand of arms, and in so far, at least, legalized and accepted their position.

Many who had fought in the American War of Independence, and had returned to Ireland, now joined this force, and their adhesion was sedulously courted by the Volunteers. The leaders were in every instance men of station and character, the well-known Lord Charlemont being the commander-in-chief.

We are constantly assured within and without the walls of Parliament, that we have done great things for Ireland within the last thirty or forty years: reversed much that was cruel and unjust, and have by milder laws, and the influence of education, given a powerful aid to the advancement and the prosperity of Ireland; and although there would be much to say in favour of all this, it might nevertheless be asked, Have we succeeded in connecting Ireland to England so effectually—have we so impressed the weaker country with the benefits of being yoked to the stronger one—and have we imbued Irishmen generally with the loyalty we like to call British—that any Minister of the Crown would now, in the year of grace 1869, recognize the existence of such a force as that volunteer army of Ireland, or dare to meet Parliament with the assurance that he had armed or equipped them?

Has all our legislation, then, been in vain? Have we done too much or too little? have we made the English hold on Ireland less firm and

less secure ? or are we simply only on a stage of that journey which shall ultimately assure us of the affections of Ireland ?

The ready test by which the Great Duke was wont to measure the success of government in any country was the amount of troops necessary to hold it ; and certainly, by this test, the Ireland of our own day gives us no cause of exultation over the Ireland of the past.

In answer to the address on opening the Parliament of '79, Henry Grattan moved, "That we beseech your Majesty to believe that it is with the utmost reluctance we are constrained to approach you on the present occasion, but the constant drain to supply absentees, and the prohibition of our trade, have caused such calamity, that the natural support of our country has decayed, and our manufacturers are dying of want ; famine stalks hand in hand with hopeless wretchedness, and the only means of succour lies in the opening of a free export trade, and to let your Irish subjects enjoy their birthright."

Flood, Hutchinson, George Ogle, and Edward Newenham, followed on the same side, and in glowing language supported the spirit of the amendment ; and at last Hussey Burgh, rising from the Treasury bench, declared "that the high office which he held could hold no competition with his principles or his conscience, and that instead of mere supplication, he would suggest an amendment, that no temporary expedient could suffice to save the nation from the ruin that impends it."

Such a declaration from such a man produced an immense effect, and the scene of excitement which the House presented is perfectly indescribable. Many supporters of the Government rose and crossed the floor of the House, members of the Viceregal household amongst them ; and as the amendment was carried almost in a shout of exultant triumph, the ladies waved their handkerchiefs from the galleries, and the cheers of the spectators could only be suppressed with difficulty. The citizens without soon caught the joyful tidings, and the streets roared with ringing cheers of delight, and a paroxysm of wild enthusiasm seized on the city as the Volunteers beat to arms to line the streets, and do honour to the patriots as they should issue from the House.

Perhaps of all the men who swayed the hearts of his countrymen by his eloquence, and by the warm glow of his patriotism kindled in Ireland a sense of national independence, there is not one who can dispute the palm with Henry Grattan. Grattan was small and slightly built, but although to appearance of weakly frame, was wiry and muscular, and so redolent of power was his temperament, that many who heard him speak came away with the impression that he was a man of bold and commanding presence—a strange error, but one which many have owned they have fallen into with regard to Lord Palmerston, whom really it is not always easy to remember as a man of low stature.

Grattan's features—with an intensely melancholy cast of expression—were finely and delicately cut : the eyes beaming with a look of gentleness peculiarly engaging, and the mouth strongly marked with those traits of

humour which in him, however, were always subordinated to deep purpose and serious effort.

It was said he took Chatham for his model, and there were certainly many points of resemblance between them. Still Grattan's manner was distinctive enough to reject all idea of imitation, and there were traces of that Celtic nature so evident about him, it would have been impossible for him to have conformed to any discipline that should have curbed the imaginative discursiveness of his mind, and the play of a fancy that soared to the highest flights of poetry. His own adoration of Chatham—of whom he said, "Modern degeneracy had not reached him, the features of his character had the hardihood of antiquity, his august mind overawed majesty itself,"—may have contributed to the impression that he had taken him for his model. There was, however, in Grattan one characteristic eminently individual, and, in a great degree, Celtic. He was extremely antithetical, not so much from any deficiency in the power of graduated reasoning and close logical ability, as from his instinctive quickness of perception, amounting to positive impatience, which rejected the slow march of a demonstration, when by a bound he could grasp the proof that lay under his hand. Wide and great as were his intellectual powers, there was that in his temperament aerial and lofty that soared high above them. Engaged with a great subject, or with one to which his genius had lent greatness, his enthusiasm knew no bounds. All the resources of that splendid intellect came forth in glittering array, and no man could marshal them with such terrible effect: lofty and impassioned appeal, noble sentiment, classic allusion, brilliant imagery, the most polished wit, sarcasm the most withering, and, not least of all, a tone of tenderness that vibrated in every heart that heard him. All were his, and none could vary, combine, or alternate them with more consummate art.

Above all his intellectual was his personal nature. There never lived a more generous, more unassuming, more kindly man—none who could dwell with more heartfelt pathos on the ties of friendship, nor one who could depict an adversary with more generous justice.

The charm that surrounded him in private life, they who knew him in his intimacy speak of as something of actual fascination. There was not one of his great powers that he could not bring, reduced to the meridian of daily life, to the intercourse of society. Without a touch of pedantry, he gave to common conversation the elegance of literary culture, and this without a vestige of the great political leader, or ever overbearing by his superiority the least venturesome or ambitious about him.

His opposite in many respects, and his great rival in parliamentary distinction, was Flood. He was slow, laboured, and methodical; uniting habits of untiring industry with almost intuitive quickness of perception; making a strange contrast at times between the measured flow of his words and the rapidity and intensity of his conceptions. In retort, and especially in sarcastic insinuation, he had no equal. There was a slowness in his utterance that seemed sententious, and his tall quaint figure, and his face,

careworn and gaunt, gave a peculiar significance to the taunts he uttered with all the seriousness of a solemn conviction.

From that severe and stern countenance, unrelieved by a smile, the words of reproof or insult came doubly embittered; and when he arose to speak, there was felt through the House that thrill of expectation which men feel when some painful act of sacrifice is to be accomplished.

Of all the orators of his time none more required to be heard rather than reported; for, though slow and measured at first, there was about him, when roused, a whirlwind rapidity of thought and expression that carried the hearer irresistibly with him, and gave his eloquence the force of a torrent.

His taunts had a rancorous savagery, too, that left indelible mischief behind them, and his caustic indifference to the pain he created heightened their insult.

His career in England was brief, and a failure. He arose to speak on a measure on which he was not prepared, and induced by the deference of the House to continue, he uttered some plausible and ill-timed generalities, and sat down amidst the exultation of his adversaries, and the total discomfiture of his friends. His generous rival said of him "he was an oak of the forest, too grand and too deep-rooted to be transplanted," and though he lived to have some successes in the English House, they were far and away below the reputation he had brought with him from the sister country.

It may not, perhaps, be matter of regret, but it is noteworthy to contrast the withering sarcasm, the almost scathing irony of that day with the flippant levities and pointless impertinences which men utter now in the sharp conflicts of personal attack; and it would be a pleasant self-flattery if we could be able to assure ourselves that this altered tone was owing to our advance in civilization, our greater refinement and more polished culture. Certainly, the tame rebukes and wordy warnings of the present day read very flatly beside the glistening sharpness of those witty passages which men exchanged in the Irish House, and it is as well for the happiness of our great dialecticians that they lived not when Flood, and Grattan, and Corry, and Hussey Burgh bartered the "amenities of debate," and shot the barbed arrows of their sarcasm into the chinks of each other's armour.

The interior of the Irish House of Commons was well adapted to add dignity and impressiveness to the character of the debates. A spacious rotunda, surrounded with a wide gallery supported on columns, was lighted from a lofty dome, the whole rich in tasteful and splendid ornamentation. The front rank of the gallery was usually occupied by ladies of the first rank and station, and behind them sat the students of Trinity College, to whom admission was freely conceded on their appearing in academic costume. The members of the House always wore full court-dress, and the whole scene, in consequence of this attention to externals, gained immensely in effect and magnificence. There was, too, a very polished courtesy observed in all the forms of debate, regulated as they were by an etiquette which had its basis in the strictest punctilio of

personal honour, and, though language was used at times whose virulence and severity could not be surpassed, there was a thorough understanding that the speaker would not disclaim the responsibility, or plead the privilege of debate when without the walls of the House.

The chivalrous tone of the day—and there is no denying that such a tone prevailed in all the relations of society—had unquestionably its origin in the forms and manners of the House; and in the same way all social intercourse benefited by the example of men who strove to express themselves with accuracy and eloquence, and who brought to the discussions of politics every aid that culture or refinement could bestow.

If the occasion would permit it one might stop here and consider how very little the two great legislative acts of England—the Union and the establishment of Maynooth—served to answer the intentions of the founders. It is only necessary to refer to the debates in the Irish House to show that the demands of the national party were not only more moderate and more reasonable than the pretensions of modern patriotism, but that they were urged in language more deferential towards England, and without menace or insult whatever. All that Grattan put forth had been already proclaimed by Molyneux, and supported by Swift, nearly a century before. The temperate demand for mere justice to Ireland cost the Irish their Parliament, a measure as mistaken and as unsatisfactory in result, as that institution to educate home-bred priests, to escape the contamination of French Jacobinism, has proved itself: being, in a great degree, the nursery of all the disaffection and illegality we are now witnessing in Ireland.

CHAPTER III.

A PAGE OF BIOGRAPHY SUPPLIED.

SIR JONAH BARRINGTON is a sort of "Brummagem" Herodotus, and, if not equal to the great Greek in picturesque eloquence or descriptive charm, is more than his match in inventive power. His "Memoir"—bating that small quality of truthfulness—is, however, amusing. It is true, in his account of Irish extravagance and reckless living, it would have been hard for him to err on the score of exaggeration. The social condition of Ireland, at the time he speaks of, was one of unbridled licence, and any eccentricity of conduct was pardonable if it only contained some humoristic ingredient or some droll situation. He makes, however, at times, very high pretensions to morality himself, and takes a stand in censuring the habits of the day, which, if we could only suspect him to be serious, would be simply gross hypocrisy; and there is a story told of him which he has *not* included in his memoirs, but which is fully as indicative of the habits of his day as anything recorded in that veracious history.

Sir Jonah, though a Judge of the Admiralty Court, and in receipt of

a very fair income, had contrived, by the liberal use of a great variety of vices, to embarrass himself to that extent, that he was reduced, as a last resource, to make terms for his retirement from office, and escape to the Continent, where he could live unmolested by creditors and untortured by duns.

To do this empty-handed, was, however, no part of his plan; and to evacuate the fortress with bag and baggage was a matter which required some address. It chanced that in some moment of unusual pressure Sir Jonah had been reduced to pawn all his plate—of which he had a considerable quantity—some being of family origin, and, consequently, especially dear to a nature so impressed with a feudal regard for ancestry, and a very feudal contempt for common honesty.

This plate had been confided to the keeping of a certain well-known pawnbroker, called Dan Malone, a man of some wealth, but chiefly celebrated for the hardness of his bargains and a most miserly disposition. He was a dry, laconic, ill-natured old fellow, with whom few but the poorest people ever dealt, for, be it remembered, men and women of condition at that period were not above resorting to the pawnbroker's in their moments of pressing necessity. Dan's forbidding exterior and coarse manners, however, excluded him completely from this walk of business, and limited him to clients of the humblest order.

Whether for greater secrecy in the transaction, or for some other motive unexplained, is not easy to conjecture, but it was to this man that Barrington resorted in his emergency. The plate was pledged for some hundred pounds, which he could not now command, and he was very unwilling to quit the country and forfeit—as he should do—such a valuable deposit.

He had already made arrangements for a little farewell dinner to some ten or twelve of his most intimate friends, amongst whom were a Bishop of Waterford and a Chief-Justice of the Common Pleas. There was also a Peer—I believe Lord Granard,—and three or four were men high at the “Bar,” and already looking to the “Bench.” It is important to bear in mind the rank and social standing of the company to understand—what, indeed, is the chief *portée* of the anecdote—the social morality of the day. To these choice friends he communicated his plan of action and obtained their pledge of concurrence and support.

This done, he repaired to Malone's house, which stood in an obscure part of the town called “Smock Alley.” “Dan,” said he, gaily, as he entered, “don't look glum at me, old boy, I'm not come to ask a ‘long day’ for the interest, or try to squeeze a ten-pound note out of you; it's another errand brings me here. There are two or three old friends of mine—Chief-Justice Fitzgerald and Dr. Marley, Bishop of Waterford amongst them—have a great desire to make your acquaintance. They have heard of your quaint dry humour, your sly drollery, and that admirable gravity which you preserve in your funniest sallies; and they asked me to make up a little dinner and include you in the company. I hope you'll

not refuse me ; our day is Thursday next ; promise now, like a good fellow, you'll be one of us."

Overwhelmed at first by such an honour, Malone no sooner recovered himself than he declined the invitation, and explained how impossible it would be for a man in his station, and with his habits, to mix in such company. He was equally prompt, too, in disclaiming the very slightest pretension to the qualities of wit and humour ascribed to him.

"Come, come," said Barrington, "you may refuse our society, if you will. You may say you'll not know us, and I can't help it ; but I'll be shot if you shall do it on the plea that I have mistaken your talents or misled my friends on the subject of them. Why, man, I never come over here for a talk with you that I don't carry away some dry bit of Irish humour, some quaint morsel of native drollery, that makes the fortune of the next time I dine out. You forget, Dan, that you see a great deal of life ; that such men as Lord Granard and Tom Conolly know nothing about you, perceive nothing strange, nothing odd, in these varieties of character ; but they are all new and interesting to others, and every remark you make upon them has its priceless value besides."

By a great deal of flattery, and by the use of persuasion which never had the appearance of persuasion, Sir Jonah at last gained over the old fellow, and it was agreed that he should find himself in Henrietta Street at six o'clock on the following Thursday.

"By the way," said Sir Jonah, as he reached the door, "it just occurs to me, you have got some plate of mine—some of the old Barrington silver, haven't you ?"

"Yes, Sir Jonah," said Dan, with a suspicious glance of the eye.

"It will look strange in celebrating a family anniversary—it is my father's birthday—if I receive my friends without my hereditary plate. I'll tell you what you can do for me, Dan : let your people take over the dishes and the other things to Henrietta Street, and, when the dinner is over, repack, and bring them back here. You have confidential fellows, haven't you ?"

"Ay, Sir Jonah, I have," was the dry reply, without, however, other sign of concurrence.

"You see no objection to the arrangement, I hope ?"

"Well, indeed, I don't know ; I don't know what to say !"

"You say yes, or you say no, Mr. Malone," said Barrington, proudly ; "but in either case I have the honour of your company."

This stroke of injured dignity did the business, and Malone at once said, "It shall be as you wish, Sir Jonah. I'll do it."

The guests had got their "cue," and from the moment that Malone appeared in the drawing-room he was met with a cordiality and a warmth that actually delighted him. Each, in turn, shook him by the hand, expressing the pleasure they had in making his acquaintance. At dinner they grew more gracious still, and, cautious and guarded as he was to keep a watch on his tongue, and say as little as he could in such com-

pany, so successful was he every time he opened his lips, and so well received was his very slightest remark, that he found himself talking away at last as freely as amongst his equals, and when, as the evening wore on, he heard the Bishop, and more still, the Earl, address him as "Malone," he knew no bound to his delight. Nor was it alone with wine he was plied; flatteries to the full as intoxicating poured in upon him from every side. His opinion was asked on questions of political importance, and his very commonplace remarks received like words of wisdom. So successfully was all this done, and so assiduously was the bottle circulated, that by eleven o'clock, when the Chief Justice had risen to propose his health, Malone heard but a very small portion of the panegyric, and quietly glided from his seat and disappeared under the table before the cheers had ceased to ring over him.

Barrington bent down to assure himself that the unconsciousness was complete, and then hastily went over and rung the bell. "How are Mr. Malone's men, Michael?"

"Very drunk, Sir Jonah," said the butler.

"Can they speak? can they see?"

"No, Sir Jonah, nor stand either! They're insensible since ten o'clock!"

"Now, then, my lords and gentlemen, let me beg you to lend us a hand to pack the plate. It's all in the next room; and we must be expeditious, for the tide serves at half-past one."

And with that the high dignitaries set to work with a will, and in less than an hour Sir Jonah was on his way to the Skerries, where a fishing-smack lay awaiting him, and with a spanking breeze he sailed, plate and all, for France, leaving Ireland never to return to it.

As for Malone, when by any accident he came to be confronted by any of the guests of that entertainment, he found himself so utterly ignored and unrecognized that he went to his grave unable to say how far his memory of the event was correct, or how far he was the dupe of his own imagination.

I heard this story more than thirty years ago, from the late John Claudius Beresford, himself an admirable type of the era of which he was one of the last survivors. He had a marvellous memory; and as he had known, more or less intimately, every public man of his time, he was a storehouse of anecdote and information on the period. Not the least humorous part of his narratives was that, while recording some trait of wild convivialism, some instance of summary law and scant justice, or some semi-barbarous usage, he could not entirely subdue the affection he bore to the period when these things were; and though not unwilling to admit that the world had grown in the interval wiser, more tolerant, and more civilized, he freely admitted that he regretted the old feudalism of the time when a gentleman enjoyed a high consideration, and when the prestige of station and fortune was sure to have its influence in the land. As he would phrase it, "All this was before the cotton-spinners; and if the world is better now, I can only say it's not so pleasant."

I suppose few of us would like to revive an age when men of high position and responsible station could lend themselves to such a fraudulent jest as this of Sir Jonah; but there was an amount of levity prevalent at the time, and a feeling which made the eccentricity of any action a full excuse for all its meanness—that absolved men from all blame, where a hearty laugh could only be secured. Let it, however, be said there was a great counterpoise to these excesses in the generous spirit that prevailed; and I have heard from the same narrator who told me this story, innumerable cases of devotedness to friendship, splendid liberality, and noble forgiveness of injury, which would go far to make one sympathize with him who admitted he was the “*laudator temporis acti*.”

The hopeless task of understanding such a people, the utter impossibility of the newly-arrived English official being able to calculate the motives or weigh the impulses of men who dashed the whole business of life with personal eccentricities, and who could not in the gravest questions forego the temptation of a joke, or the opportunity of a jest, was bad enough in itself, but it led to still worse in the total misapprehension it inculcated, and in the false estimate each nation conceived of the other.

If the Irishman deemed the Englishman dull, ungenial, and depressed, the Englishman imagined the Irishman to be unstable, thoughtless, and harebrained, and even the abilities which he could not deny him he believed of little value to their possessor, when associated with a temperament devoted to pleasure and self-indulgence, and with a disposition that cared only for the present, and was recklessly indifferent for the future.

That a people who took such careless views of their own affairs, who were such spendthrifts of fortune, and so heedless of the morrow, could be firm and steadfast in their political attachments, did not appear very probable to the English Minister; and so when Mr. Pitt confided to Lord Castlereagh the charge of the measure of “the Union,”—when he gave him a *carte blanche* as to the means,—he really believed he had overcome all the difficulties of the case, and that nothing like formidable obstacle could present itself to the Bill. Let us, in our next chapter, glance at that famous debate.

The Stream that Hurries by.

AN UNPUBLISHED POEM BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE COLLEGIANS."

I.

THE stream that hurries by yon fixed shore
Returns no more ;
The wind that dries at morn yon dewy lawn
Breathes, and is gone ;
Those wither'd flow'rs to summer's ripening glow
No more shall blow ;
Those fallen leaves that strew yon garden bed
For aye are dead.

II.

Of laugh, of jest, of mirth, of pleasure past,
Nothing shall last ;
On shore, on sea, on hill, on vale, on plain,
Nought shall remain ;
Of all for which poor mortals vainly mourn,
Nought shall return ;
Life hath his hour in heav'n and earth beneath,
And so hath Death.

III.

Not all the chains that clank in eastern clime
Can fetter Time ;
For all the phials in the doctor's store
Youth comes no more ;
No drug on Age's wrinkled cheek renews
Life's early hues ;
Not all the tears by pious mourners shed
Can wake the dead.

IV.

For all Spring gives, and Winter takes again,
We grieve in vain ;
Vainly for sunshine fled, and joys gone by,
We heave the sigh ;
On, ever on, with unexhausted breath,
Time hastes to Death :
Even with each word we speak, a moment flies,
Is born, and dies.

V.

If thus, through lesser Nature's empire wide
 Nothing abide,—
If wind, and wave, and leaf, and sun, and flow'r,
 Have each their hour,—
He walks on ice whose dallying spirit clings
 To earthly things;
And he alone is wise whose well-taught love
 Is fix'd above.

VI.

Truths firm as bright, but oft to mortal ear
 Chilling and drear,
Harsh as the raven's croak the sounds that tell
 Of pleasure's knell;
Pray, reader, that at least the minstrel's strain
 Not all be vain;
And when thou bend'st to God the suppliant knee,
 Remember me!

Pallas, October 10, 1836.

GERALD GRIFFIN.

Our New Bishop.

APROPOS OF THE "ŒCUMENICAL."

I.

THE pretty town of Ville-Rosé, which the artistic traveller journeying between Y—— and Z—— must have seen on his way, and admired through the carriage-windows, is one of those amiable little French boroughs built at a time when men seem to have had a happier notion of the picturesque than they possess now-a-days. Imagine a sinuous street winding for the better part of a mile between two rows of gable-roofed houses, and cut in half by an ancient market-place, in which are a miniature cathedral, the remnant of an old manor-house, now transformed into a prefecture, a grey mansion which is the residence of Monseigneur the Bishop, a few shops, and an inn with a painted signboard swinging, old-fashion, over the doorway. Once upon a time Ville-Rosé was in the domain of a famous Count who was a father to his subjects, and kept a gibbet-tree in permanence, as the custom then was, on the precise spot where now stands the municipal pump. Your history of France will tell you all about the quarrels between the house of Ville-Rosé and that of Valois. In the end the Valois got the best of it, and cut off the head of a Ville-Rosé on the Place de Grève, in Paris, not far from the site on which M. Haussmann has since erected two handsome gas-lamps with a dozen branches. But the Ville-Rosés were a sturdy race, and were not to be put down for a head more or less. If you turn to the reign of Louis XIII. you will read how Gaston de Ville-Rosé fell to loggerheads with Richelieu, and how the Cardinal besieged the town, and how, all the provisions being exhausted, save one pair of boots belonging to the Count, that magnanimous nobleman ordered that they should be divided equally amongst his troops, only reserving to himself the heel of the left foot, which he ate, and then perished rather than give in. All these things are remembered in Ville-Rosé to this day, and the beadle at the cathedral still shows to the passing stranger the magnificent tomb of the Count Gaston, which was once covered with silver, before it was stripped by lawless *sans-culottes* in 1793. At present Ville-Rosé is a peaceful town, well disposed towards everybody, and more particularly towards the reigning dynasty. On the façade of the prefecture—where once was carved the escutcheon of the Ville-Rosés; and after that (from 1792 to 1804) the bonnet of liberty; and after that, again, the Imperial eagle; and after that the fleur-de-lys of the Bourbons; and after that (Ludovico Philippo regnante) the Gallic cock; and after that (Consule Rollino, when M. Ledru Rollin was Home Minister) the Republican triangle—now shines once more

a Napoleonic eagle ; though certain evil tongues pretend that this eagle is no more than part of the old cock that made pretend to crow there from 1830 to 1848, the sculptor having merely strengthened the legs a bit and added a little more beak to the head. For my part, I should have been inclined to treat this assertion as a calumny, but I cannot quite forget that the inn in the market-place, already spoken of, was once called *l'Hôtel du Roi*, and had the three golden lilies of France upon its signboard. Since '52, however, it has changed its name to *Hôtel de l'Empereur*, and the lilies on the board have made way for the Imperial bees. Many people have forgotten this change, for in these times events succeed each other so fast that it is not everybody that has leisure to remember trifles ; but I have not forgotten it, neither am I likely to forget it until Maitre Claude, the host, has his signboard entirely fresh painted. For in '52 the worthy man, when he rechristened his establishment (I believe at the peremptory request of Monsieur de Fustige, the Prefect), simply directed the artist to modify the lilies so as to give them the look of bees ; and the artist did so, leaving, however, the royal *field azure*, whereas everybody knows that the arms of his Imperial Majesty are five bees (not three) laid out flat * upon a *field sinople*. Perhaps though, now I come to ponder upon it, Maitre Claude may not have acted thus altogether without design, for Ville-Rosé was one of those towns that were firmly persuaded in the beginning that the Empire would never last ; and Maitre Claude may have thought it a sin to throw away money upon bees when at any moment the lilies might be called into service again. In those days Ville-Rosé was possessed of a bishop who held firmly by the lilies and all who sported them. This holy man had been raised to the episcopacy by Charles X., and he could never be brought to look upon Louis Philippe as otherwise than a usurper. So long as his Orleanist Majesty's reign lasted, Monseigneur kept on terms of cool civility with the authorities, treating the Prefect to an occasional dinner indeed, but doing so rather as an act of courtesy towards the man than as a token of deference towards the functionary. At dessert it was Monseigneur's invariable practice to fill his glass to the brim with old Bordeaux, and to say to his guest :—"Excuse me, Monsieur le Préfet, but it is a custom of mine always to drink to the health of my sovereign," and the two gentlemen would thereupon raise their glasses together, crying out : "The King !" —with this difference, however, that the prelate's toast was intended for H. R. H. the Count of Chambord, whilst that of the Prefect—though it ought by rights to have been drunk for the reigning monarch—was not probably intended for anybody. With sentiments so royalist it is easy to conceive what must have been Monseigneur's indignation upon hearing that the Empire had been proclaimed. To the Republic he had submitted cheerfully : in the first place, because resistance would have been of no

* *Laid out flat* is not the correct heraldic term. I fancy the real expression is *displayed*. Unfortunately, we French have no Garter King to set us right in these little matters.

use; and in the second, because he hoped, that by dint of the vagaries in which they were indulging, the Republicans would soon pave the way to a Royalist restoration. This explains how it was that he went to bless a Tree of Liberty in great state, and condescended, with his own white episcopal hands, to stroke the head of an unkempt citizen who was bawling: "Vive la Guillotine!" I do not say the excellent pastor's conscience did not remind him, by an occasional twinge, that this was a somewhat Machiavellic sort of proceeding; but, then, he consoled himself by reflecting that it was all for the good of the Church, and I have heard he did double penance to square his accounts with Heaven. On the day, however, when he found that all his pet hopes had been frustrated by the election of a new usurper, Monseigneur's patience abruptly gave way, and he vowed with solemn emphasis that if ever he was caught bowing to an Imperial functionary he would forfeit his share of future bliss. Somehow these words got abroad—as ill-timed words always do, by the way—and it having been reported that Monseigneur was going to officiate in the cathedral on the very Sunday following the election, the whole of Ville-Rosé turned out to note how he would demean himself at the critical prayer: "*Domine, saluum fac Imperatorem nostrum Napoleonem.*" Faithful, stout-hearted old prelate! I still see him on the altar-steps as he stood that morning amidst a profound hush, and with every eye in the cathedral fixed on him. "*Domine, saluum,*" he began in a clear tone, and got as far as the word *fac*; but here he was seized with a fit of coughing, the organ opportunely pealed in, and when next his voice was heard it was saying calmly, "*in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.*" Shall I add that when Monseigneur returned home after the service his face was beaming with unusual good-humour, and that from that day forth it was noticed in Ville-Rosé that on every subsequent occasion when he officiated, Monseigneur always coughed at that word *fac*, which made the dean and chapter smile, the choristers titter, and the Prefect bite his moustache with uncommon fierceness.

If I have thus dilated upon some of the peculiarities that distinguished our worthy Bishop, it is partly for the sake of observing how much we have changed in Ville-Rosé since 1852, and partly, because talking of the good prelate leads me direct to the subject of the present narrative, which is the recent election of a new bishop in our ancient borough. Had you, madam or sir, come to visit Ville-Rosé some few weeks ago, you would have found us all in a state of strange perturbation. Our streets,—habitually so quiet that the fighting of two dogs in the roadway is enough to bring the entire population to their windows,—our streets, I say, were for once as excited as they had been on that famous occasion already spoken of, when we planted a Tree of Liberty in the middle of the market-place, and swore to water it with our blood rather than suffer it to die. But this time the emotion was of another sort; there was no blood in it, nor yet swearing. It was simply this, that the *Journal Officiel* had arrived that morning with the news that Monseigneur l'Evêque de Ville-Rosé was about to be raised to an archbishopric, and to the

Senate, and that the Imperial Government was going to recommend him to the Court of Rome for one of the vacant cardinals' hats.

The Bishop, upon whom so much honour was to be conferred, was not, of course, the same who was addicted to coughing. That kindly but unbending prelate died within a year or two of his present Majesty's accession, staunch to the end, and murmuring, in the last mass he ever said, the same words he used to whisper at the cathedral when his fits of coughing oppressed him: "*Domine, saluum fac Regem nostrum Henricum Quintum.*" No; the prelate, for whom the crowned mitre, the senatorial beret, and the scarlet hat were destined, was a bishop of very different mould. He was the next successor but one to Monseigneur who coughed. Tall, hawk-eyed, stern-faced, and imperious, he was just such a priest as we can fancy Richelieu. Every one of his grades in the church had been earned by some vigorous pamphlet or startling sermon. There was no question about his being of the church militant. He knew Hebrew, he could talk Greek, he was versed in Coptic, and he wrote his pastoral letters in a Latin so pure, that it was the envy of the whole College of Cardinals. The rise of Monseigneur Fulmine had been astonishingly rapid; so rapid, indeed, that were it possible for priests to be tormented by the secular feeling of jealousy, nine-tenths of Monseigneur's colleagues must have detested him cordially, and wished him Bishop of Je——. Reader, I forget the name of that town of the Jebusites that was once besieged with trumpets.

But the rise of Monseigneur Fulmine was not the result of mere scholarship. The fact of his being well up in Coptic might have been a potent recommendation for him to the Academy of Cairo; but I doubt whether it would have helped him much with the Emperor. If Monseigneur had scaled the ladder so fast, it was because he had gone the right way to work. He had cast in his lot with the Imperial Government. He had written a volume, in which he had buffeted the Legitimists, smitten the Orleanists on the cheek, and given a formidable kick to the Republicans. He had sown bitterness and dismay at the Vatican, by starting the question of the Gallican rights at a moment when Cardinal Antonelli was growing a little bumptious; and had brought down upon him in arms both Monseigneur Dupanloup, M. Louis Veuillot, and the Count de Montalembert, by the terrific declaration that in France the Pope stood only second, and that the head of the French Church was the Emperor. But this was not all: for Monseigneur Pie, Bishop of Poitiers, having lifted up his head at this impious sentiment, Monseigneur Fulmine had gone out with book and pen, and valiantly waged war against that prelate, causing him to retreat behind his outworks, and utter piercing cries, in which he was joined by *L'Univers*, *Le Monde*, *L'Union*, and *La Gazette de France*; who, for the moment, forgot their differences, and wondered in lamentable chorus what the world was coming to. Finally, at the three political elections that had taken place, whilst he was at Ville-Rosé, Monseigneur had thrown the whole weight of his influence in the scale of the official candidates, thereby procuring for our fortunate town the honour

of being represented,—firstly, by a General of Infantry, aged 72; secondly, by a General of Cavalry, aged 73; and thirdly, by a General of Artillery, aged 74, and deaf; the last of whom is, I believe, legislating for our behoof at the moment of penning these lines. Such important services as these could not be ignored, and the promotion to the Senate and the Archiepiscopate was but the just reward of them. There were, even, many who marvelled why it was that Monseigneur had not been promoted before; how it came that he had been left nine years at Ville-Rosé. But the Imperial Government knows what it is about. It has been taken in so often by eloquent prelates, who waxed warm in the good cause so long as there were dignities to obtain, and waxed cool in the same when there was nothing more to win, that it has grown to be wary of lavishing its good things too soon. To hold Monseigneur in patience, and to keep his zeal burning, there was now and then a rise of a step in the Legion of Honour: one year came the ribbon; after that the rosette; and then subsequently the collar. There were honorary favours, too, such as a chaplaincy at Court, invitations to Compiègne, and an autograph letter from his Majesty, accompanying a present of the *Life of Cæsar*, bound in purple, and printed on vellum-post, with gilt edges. But the last honours of all were prudently deferred until Monseigneur had gone so far in his imperialism that he could never by any possibility retract. This final leap he took, by one morning publishing a pamphlet, in which, disdaining to mince matters, he candidly stated that the reign of the Bonaparte dynasty had been prophesied in Isaiah, and that revolution and sacrilege, republicanism and blasphemy, were four synonymous terms. After this, there being no further cause for fear, the Government had doubtless reflected that to delay promotion any longer would only serve to damp the spirits of Monseigneur; and, thereupon, had appeared in the *Journal Officiel* that momentous paragraph which created such excitement at Ville-Rosé.

I should be advancing too much were I to say that Monseigneur Fulmine was very popular amongst us. Popular, in fact, is hardly the word to apply to such a thunder-wielding celebrity. You had only to glance at our bishop to see that between him and the people there could exist but little sympathy, and that little of a very cool, condescending sort. Whether he rode through the streets in his handsome brougham, or walked in state up the nave of his cathedral, preceded by the silent vergers and followed by his awe-struck chaplains, or whether he looked down upon the whole congregation from under the crimson canopy of his throne, there was always the same expression of haughty calm on his face, an expression that kept familiarity at arms'-length and forced the most stubborn necks to bow. In some towns the prefect and the bishop are friends on equal terms, and in others I have known the bishop defer with humility to the prefect; but it was not so at Ville-Rosé. In our diocese, M. de Fustige, great and terrible as he was in his bearing towards us small fry, was the very obedient servant of Monseigneur. Not for worlds would he have disagreed with him, or addressed him otherwise

than bareheaded, or ventured to laugh in his presence. Monseigneur knew it, and treated M. de Fustige with the same grave consideration which a well-bred man shows to his butler. As for the Mayor, the General of Division, the President of the Tribunal, and the Procureur-*Impérial*, the mere name of Monseigneur was enough to set them all bending their backs together, as if they had been pulled by a string; and I am persuaded that nothing on earth could have induced any one of them to cross the threshold of his lordship without first putting on a dress-coat, a white cravat, and a new pair of gloves. This will give you an idea of the esteem in which Monseigneur was held in his diocese; for I would have you remark, that neither the General of the Division nor the Procureur-*Impérial* was over-famous for humility, and it was both a novel sight and a wondrous to behold them in the company of his lordship so extremely abashed and respectful. Three or four times in the course of the year, Monseigneur used to issue cards for a state dinner, and once a week, on Tuesday evenings, he held a levee. On these latter occasions the drawing-rooms were crammed to suffocation; all the people of note within a radius of ten miles were in the habit of attending; and if the attitude of such mighty personages as the Prefect, the General, and the Procureur was humble, I leave you to judge how reverential was the deportment of the lowlier guests. The hour of the levees was eight, but twenty minutes before that time the town was always astir to see the carriages pass. The tradesmen stood on their doorsteps reading the morning's paper from Paris; their wives sat at the open window, if the season was fine, or clung cosily to their husbands' arms if it was cold and wintry. At the principal café the tables were moved on to the pavement outside, so that the customers should lose nothing of the inspiring sight; and at the street-corners, no matter what the weather was, small boys and small girls congregated in groups, with here and there a red-breeched soldier, his hands dug deep in his trousers' pockets, and a paper cigarette in his mouth. Punctually as the old clock in the cathedral tower chimed musically the three-quarters past seven, the rolling of wheels would begin; and, simultaneously, marching four-and-four, with the drum-major at its head, the regimental band of the battalion in garrison would debouch on to the market-place. This attendance of the band to play Beethoven and Mendelssohn under Monseigneur's windows was a civility on the part of the Colonel, M. le Vicomte de la Pomponette, a brilliant officer, who, like our Bishop, had made his way very rapidly in the world, and was, consequently, viewed with favour by his lordship. In the train of the musicians followed, as a matter of course, all the tagrag and bobtail of the town, escorted in their turn by all the available policemen. Five minutes were spent in forming the tagrag into a semi-circle three deep, and keeping them out of the way of the carriages; and then, for the next hour, vehicle after vehicle, of every age and shape, size and build, would defile in a motley unbroken procession. First to arrive was generally M. de Fustige, in a sober-looking, official brougham with two horses. As the distance between the Prefect's door and Monseigneur's

was only ten yards, it may perhaps occur to some carping minds that M. de Fustige might just as well have walked; but I take leave to remind such critics, that if a Prefect were to go to an episcopal levee on foot as if he were an ordinary mortal, there would soon be an end to all authority. Next after the Prefect (very imposing, by the way, with the scarlet ribbon of "Commander" round his throat), the General and his wife, the Mayor and Mayoress, M. le Président and Madame la Présidente, the first couple in a respectable clarence, the other two in no less respectable frys. After that a rumbling noise in the distance, a thrill amongst the crowd, and a stately family-coach drives up, bearing Monsieur le Marquis de Ville-Rosé (descendant of the celebrated Gaston who devoured part of his boots), Madame la Marquise, Monsieur le Comte their son, and Mdle. Hermine de Ville-Rosé. The arrival of this conveyance always creates a profound sensation. The coach is emblazoned with arms and coronets on every foot of panel; it has a hammer-cloth, four large silver-gilt lamps, one footman behind and a towering *chasseur*, who looks so magnificent with his cocked-hat and plumes that the crowd once cheered him under the impression that it was he who was the Marquis. Observe, I pray, the difference between this majestic equipage and that which follows it, for here we have the old régime and the new. The next comers are marquises too: M. le Marquis and Madame la Marquise de la Roche-Courbette. They rattle up in a showy new brougham from Paris, with the prancing clatter of two splendid bays. Monsieur is one of the deputies of the department, and wears a whole constellation of foreign orders on his coat; Madame is one of the beauties of the *Chaussée d'Antin*: her hair is ablaze with diamonds; and her dress of *crêpe de chine* will be charged 3,000 francs by Mr. Worth. And yet see how small M. de la Courbette looks when he meets his brother marquis in Monseigneur's drawing-room. Madame de la Courbette would give half her diamonds if Madame de Ville-Rosé would only ask her to dinner and call her "*ma chère*;" and M. de la Courbette would cheerfully renew the feat of Gaston de Ville-Rosé and eat part of his boots, if only the proud old Marquis would shake him by the hand and *tutoyer* him. But no such luck. The elder Marquis bows to the younger with such a refinement of courtesy, and lays so much stress upon the title of Marquis with which he addresses him, that M. de la Courbette cannot but feel the irony of the salutation, and tries all in vain to appear at his ease. What makes it more provoking, too, is that there are some shabby-looking people in the room with whom the Ville-Rosés seem to be on terms of cordial familiarity, shaking hands, laughing and joking with them as with intimate friends. These people have no diamonds, however, nor yet dresses from Worth's, nor yet three-hundred-guinea broughams. Those three old ladies, now talking to the Marchioness, were borne up to the door each in a sedan-chair, to the mute stupefaction of a Parisian who happened to be looking out of the window of the "*Hôtel de l'Empereur*," and had never seen such vehicles before. That ill-dressed little man, now offering a pinch of snuff to the Marquis, came in a pair of galoshes, which

he has left below in the cloak-room; and that other little man, paying compliments to Mdlle. Hermine de Ville-Rosé, rode in from his country place upon a rough cob, which will carry him back home to-night a good seven miles' ride, to save cab-hire. But, poverty notwithstanding, these ladies and gentlemen are of the true blue blood, which the Ville-Roses love. There is no question about their parchments; they can show their sixteen, thirty-two, and sixty-four quarterings, which M. de la Roche-Courbette cannot. They are Legitimists, moreover, who have been sulking nobly and consistently for the last nine-and-thirty years, refusing to acknowledge any sovereign since Charles X. Their talk is of the Pontifical Zouaves, Monseigneur Dupanloup, and the last consistory. They keep up in a corner snugly to themselves, carefully shutting out the profane; and if they attend the levees of Monseigneur Fulmine—whom they consider as bad as a heretic and despise accordingly—it is simply to show their respect for the Church which the prelate represents, and to set a wholesome example to their inferiors.

Of course Monseigneur is aware of this. He sees the tacit disapprobation implied in the ceremonious bows to which his noble guests treat him. He has noted (and so have his chaplains, and so has the Prefect, and so has everybody, for that matter) that the Marquis, though he attends the levees, refuses the invitations to dinner, and that neither M. de Ville-Rosé, nor any of his Legitimist friends, ever condescend to touch the refreshments which Monseigneur's footmen hand round on massive silver trays. But after all, what does his lordship care? It will be quite time enough to think of propitiating the Legitimists when he has become a Cardinal, like Monseigneur Donnet and Monseigneur Bonnechose; and, meanwhile, he has adoration in plenty from all those Imperial functionaries, noblemen, and noblewomen who form a glittering circle around him and bring to his feet the finest homage that an ambitious man can wish, that of wealth and power. Verily, now that I look back upon those episcopal levees, so unlike what Ville-Rosé had ever seen before, and so unlike—if I may judge by the modest tenour of our present Bishop's mind—what it will for a long while see again, I am struck by the animation which a single man of parts is able to throw into an obscure provincial town. When again shall we see the regimental band playing Beethoven every Tuesday evening under the Bishop's windows, whilst a crowd of three or four hundred people in silks and jewels, white gloves and white ties, thread their way through sumptuously furnished apartments to a reception-room as grand as a Minister's? When again shall we have a Bishop who will be able to collect, out of such a hopeless town and department as ours, a court that would have rivalled that of the Archbishop of Lyons or the Archbishop of Bordeaux? As I write I have the photograph of Monseigneur before me, and I find it difficult to realize that my fellow-citizens and I have seen the last of him. My calendar tells me that it is Tuesday, my watch points to eight, and it seems to me that, in a few minutes, I shall hear M. de la Pomponette's band strike up the famous Sonata in G. "Baptiste,

have you laid out my evening clothes and opera-hat? have the carriages begun to drive up yet? have you ordered me a fly at the 'Hôtel de l'Empereur?' But Baptiste only stares. He remembers, as I do, that autumn evening when Monseigneur held his last levee, three short days only after his promotion to the Archbishopric. Monseigneur must have been in a grievous hurry to be gone, that he could not wait so much as a week to allow us time to subscribe for a suitable testimonial. As it was, we had to make shift with an address engrossed on parchment at four-and-twenty-hours' notice, which the Prefect presented "in the name of the whole diocese," speaking in a broken voice and with his official coat on. What a crowd there was that night. How we pushed and elbowed to get a sight of Monseigneur—to watch how he bore his fresh-blooming honours. What a death-like silence there was when he stood up to speak, and how we panted with emotion when he declared "that the one hope of his life had been to live and die amongst us, that our welfare and our spiritual interests had been his sole care, and that the proudest day of his life would also be the saddest, since it took him away from Ville-Rosé." It is only great and clever men, such as Monseigneur, who have the knack of saying these things so as to make men feel moved and women burst into tears. I looked over at the old Marquis de Ville-Rosé and fancied his lip quivered; Madame la Marquise was crying; and that evening, for the first time, the Legitimists dipped their lips in his lordship's wine, and went one by one to shake hands with him.

Next morning, whilst the memory of his pathetic farewell still lingered kindly in our thoughts, Monseigneur was off by the six-o'clock express. It was a sad day. The beadle at the cathedral put a crape round his hat, the *Journal de Ville-Rosé* appeared with a black border, the Dean and Chapter looked sorrowful, the shopkeepers remarked that it would be a bad thing for trade, and I myself, when I sat down to record on paper my impressions of the event, found my pen instinctively tracing the word *Ichabod*—which meant that our glory had departed.

II.

Sometimes it happens that whilst the Bishop promoted goes out through one gate of the city, his successor makes a triumphal entry through another. In these cases the line of conduct to be pursued is evident and simple. The inhabitants have only to act as the loyal people of Paris do when there is a change of dynasty: that is, leave the outgoing power to take care of itself, and hurry off without loss of time to cheer the new. Now, seeing that we were an acute population at Ville-Rosé, notwithstanding our smallness, it is just possible that we might have behaved in this way towards Monseigneur Fulmine had a successor to that admirable prelate been appointed immediately. But the successor was not appointed; and so, during ten whole days or thereabouts, we groaned and whimpered to our hearts' content, having nothing else to do. One morning, however, it occurred to somebody that there had been enough of whimpering. "To moan ten full days," remarked this philosophical person, "is contrary to the

spirit of nature ;" and forthwith, with a view to enlivening us, he started the query as to who would succeed to the heritage of Monseigneur ? This was like throwing a bone amongst melancholy dogs ; the whining ceased as by magic, and we all flew on to the bone. The first to perceive that a sudden revulsion of feeling had taken place were the photographers of the town, who had lately been selling portraits of Monseigneur Fulmine by the gross ; the next to make the discovery were the booksellers, who had been driving a brisk trade in the pamphlets and sermons of his lordship. Abruptly, the sale both of photographs and pamphlets stopped ; and, by a logical coincidence, the subscriptions which had been pouring into the hands of the Mayor for the purchasing of a testimonial to our late Bishop came to a dead stand-still. Of course ; and this was just as it should be. Monotonous emotions are not good for man ; the human mind has need of variety. Ask any Frenchman whom it was he embraced yesterday : he will tell you, Peter. Inquire of him whom he purposes to embrace to-morrow : he will answer, Paul. Monseigneur Fulmine only shared the common lot. He had had his day, been presented with an address, and mourned for ; what more could he want ? Had he any right to expect that we should be miserable about him eternally ? Certainly not. Were we not by every means justified in forgetting him completely now that his back was turned ? Unquestionably. . . .

As a rule the selection of a new bishop does not cause much excitement in France ; and this for the simple reason that nine Frenchmen out of ten scarcely know what a bishop is, or, at most, have but a hazy notion of his duties. In certain prefectures, of the second or third class, one often sees Madame la Préfète perplexed with doubts as to whether it is Monseigneur or Monsieur le Général who is entitled to precedence ; and this knotty point has generally to be settled by prompt action on the part of Monseigneur, who, as soon as dinner is announced, darts forward and offers Madame his arm before his competitor has had time to forestall him. Of course, in higher prefectures, Madame knows perfectly that a bishop defers only to a duke, a senator, or a minister, and that a cardinal-archbishop yields the *pas* to nobody. But that there should be any hesitation on these points, even in the mind of a newly-married little hostess of a third-class prefecture, is a sufficient indication of the irreligious spirit of this unbelieving age, which has so reduced bishops from their ancient state, and so miserably curtailed their salaries. Speaking for myself, as a solitary citizen, I think we might with advantage pay more attention, in France, to affairs ecclesiastical than we are wont to do. It is true our unhallowed Revolution of 1789 has deprived bishops of the right to fine, flog, and hang, which they exercised a hundred years ago with infinite zeal to the greater glory of the church ; and it is true, moreover, that the same Revolution has impiously ordained that they should pay taxes like other folk. Nevertheless, and despite these sacrilegious encroachments, a French bishop still wields a great deal more power than, say, an English prelate. All the livings of a diocese are in his gift. He has complete authority over the convents and monasteries, a right of control over the

scholastic establishments conducted by priests ; and, as though this were not enough, he is at liberty to give as well as take away, for he can promote, translate, degrade or dismiss, his clergy as he thinks fit. Under the circumstances, if we were to pay a little more attention than we are wont to do to ecclesiastical appointments, I think it would scarcely be amiss.

At Ville-Rosé, previously to the time of Monseigneur Fulmine, it had always been a matter of the profoundest indifference to us as to who our bishops were. We confidently accepted our prelates on trust, such as Providence, the Pope and the Government sent them ; and if we detected that a new bishop was taller or shorter, fatter or thinner, than his predecessor, we confined ourselves to making a note of the fact without drawing any invidious conclusions therefrom. On the occasion of Monseigneur Fulmine's departure, however, it was altogether another matter ; and for once we began seriously and anxiously to discuss who was likely to be his successor. The fact is, Bishop Fulmine had been such a brilliant light that he had thrown, as it were, a halo of glory over our well-beloved borough. We people of Ville-Rosé had got into the habit of hearing the world talk about us. When we journeyed to other cities we found ourselves objects of envy and curiosity in the eyes of the inhabitants. Men said to us : " Ah ! you come from Ville-Rosé. That's a famous bishop you've got there ! " Women eyed us with interest and exclaimed : " He is very good-looking, isn't he ? They say he has such a sweet voice ! Have you ever dined with him, Monsieur ? " Furthermore, in the summer months, on Whit-Sunday and Ascension Day for instance, when it was known that Monseigneur would preach, the trains used to bring us down crowds of visitors, whose coming inflated our vanity and rejoiced our tradesmen. After basking for nine years in the rays of such an episcopal planet, it was only natural that we should dread relapsing again into darkness. What if our new bishop should be eighty years old and toothless ? What if he should stammer ? What if he should be some poor, ignorant old *curé*, only promoted on account of his Bonapartist zeal, and addicted to talking dog-Latin ? These were horrid thoughts. A local journalist filled us with dismay by stating his personal experiences of a bishop who ate pease with a knife and picked the drumstick of a fowl with his fingers.

The worst of it, too, was that we knew of no available priest, glorious in his works and discreet in his manners, on whose behalf we might petition our Prefect to exert himself. I do not believe there is such a thing as a clergy-list in France,—at least I have never seen one,—but we had a bootmaker in the town who was a very good substitute. He had been a sacristan once, and knew the names of all the remarkable priests on his fingers' ends. Him we accordingly sought out in his back-shop and consulted as to our prospects. But he could give us no hope. After a patient calculation, which he performed with a piece of chalk on the sole of a slipper, he declared that there were nineteen priests of talent unprovided with bishoprics ; only that sixteen of them were Legitimists, and

that of the remaining three who leaned towards the Imperial dynasty, the first was too old, the second too young, and the third not quite in his right mind. "This last one," he explained, "would have done very well for you, for he was uncommonly eloquent in the pulpit. But it seems he has been writing three volumes to prove that the only person infallible here below is the Emperor, and the effort has rather unsettled him."

He was a truthful bootmaker who said this. We knew he was incapable of deceiving us; and so went away discouraged after his announcement, reflecting that evil times had lighted on our borough. That evening, as it happened, there was a small party at the Château de la Roche-Courbette, some three or four miles out of Ville-Rosé. Monsieur le Marquis had invited a few of the local dignitaries; and, in the drawing-room, whilst the tea was being handed round, Madame la Marquise started the subject of the vacant bishopric, apostrophizing me as to my consultation with the bootmaker:

"You gentlemen have been trying to find us a candidate, have you not, Monsieur Gustave?"

"Yes, Madame la Marquise, but without success."

"What a pity! We could have got up such a pretty petition to the Government. We might have had it written on toned paper and tied with blue favours. The Marquis and the Prefect would have presented it to the Minister of Justice, and everybody here would have signed it."

"Signed what, my dear?" asks the Marquis.

"Why, a petition in favour of a new bishop such as Monseigneur. Madame la Générale, Madame la Préfète, these gentlemen and I want to find a bishop who will be as much like the last one as possible."

At this I notice that the Prefect winces. He has not forgotten the immense amount of humble pie he consumed under Monseigneur's reign, and the prospect of continuing the same diet under his successor is not particularly tantalizing. The General, who also ate humble pie, gives a kind of snort and bursts out frankly:

"Egad, Madame, I hope our new bishop will be made of softer wood than the other."

"To be sure he was terribly haughty," says the Marchioness, laughing.

"And arrogant," bursts in Madame de Fustige.

"And cross-tempered," remarks Madame la Générale; and upon this the tongues being loosed, we devote ten minutes to the unrestrained pleasure of picking our late idol to bits. The Prefect, as becomes his position, abstains from the sport. The Mayor, less versed in diplomacy, joins in it naively. The General, who is too good a soldier to like cackling, sips his tea in silence, but mutters once between his teeth: "Confound the fellow, he used to handle us as if we were ninepins."

"I am certain he must have had a glass eye!" exclaims the Marchioness, "he used to stare so coldly."

"And do you know I believe he dyed his hair?" rejoins Madame la Préfète; "that lustrous black was not natural."

"Tush, my dear," intercedes the Prefect, enjoyably, "this is going too far."

"I don't think so at all," laughs Madame la Générale. "When we poor women dye, you gentlemen proclaim it fast enough."

"Yes, but I don't think Monseigneur did dye his hair," responds the Prefect.

"He had scarcely any to dye," observes the Mayor, simply: "he always wore a skull-cap."

"Monsieur Jules Siffiot, you don't join in the debate," exclaims the Marchioness, rapping her fan on the table near her. "Is Monseigneur guilty or not guilty, did he dye or did he not?"

M. Jules Siffiot is editor of the *Journal de Ville-Rosé*, which went into mourning on the day of Monseigneur's departure.

"Madame," he answers, coolly, "I never was close enough to his lordship to judge. Being but a humble journalist, Monseigneur never allowed me to come within twenty yards of him."

"And yet what a touching article you wrote on the day he left! You said you felt as if you had lost a second father."

"So I did, Madame. My father used to pull my ears, and tell me I should come to no good. Monseigneur used to make the same observation; and if he never pulled my ears, I am sure it was not for want of the wishing."

Everybody laughs. Monsieur Siffiot is one of those gentlemen who can never be taken at a disadvantage.

"A thought has just occurred to me," remarks the Marquise, after a moment's pause. "Monseigneur's departure is a more serious matter than we fancy. Had he stayed he would have represented this diocese at the Œumenical Council. As it is, we shall not be represented."

"That's obvious," observes M. Siffiot. "No bishop, no representative."

"Dear me, I had forgotten the Council," says Madame la Préfète, with something like consternation in her voice. "What a calamity this is! I almost wish Monseigneur were back again."

"The more so as, if he were back again, he would soon be off for Rome," rejoins the Mayor, amused at his own wit.

"I should have been glad to see Ville-Rosé represented," murmurs the Marchioness. "Monseigneur Fulmine would certainly have done us honour. He will make more noise at the Council than even Monseigneur Dupanloup or Monseigneur Plantier, and by-and-by there would have been a mention of the Bishop of Ville-Rosé in all the history-books. We might, then, have had a statue to him in the market-place, and a column commemorative of the Council in one of the aisles of the cathedral. Dear, dear! how provoking this is. Why couldn't the Government have waited till next year before taking him away?"

"Monseigneur seems to have risen in value again during the last five minutes," remarks M. Siffiot, phlegmatically. "I fancy we are beginning to forget his glass eye and his stained locks."

"I never said his eye was glass," replies the Marquise, impetuously. "I only said it looked like it."

"And I am sure I don't know that his hair was dyed," adds Madame la Préfète, relenting. "It may be only a mistake of mine."

"Come, come," growls the General, "the Bishop was very well as he was just now; I don't see any use in putting him together again. He's gone, and won't come back, that's the long and short of it—so let's talk of somebody else."

The Marquis nods approvingly. "Bravo, General! Let's try between us and find Monseigneur a successor. If we let my wife talk, she will soon be for writing a letter to ask his lordship to return, and she will cajole you and me into signing it. I see her intention in her eyes. She is already thinking of the toned paper and blue ribbons."

"Well," smiles the Marquise, "wouldn't that be better than letting the Council go by, and this poor diocese remain without a representative?"

"But who told you we should be without a representative? There's plenty of time to have a fresh bishop, and to send him to Rome in his new clothes."

"Yes; but it won't be the same thing. If we have a new bishop he won't be a man of talent. The bootmaker told M. Gustave so."

"Who is the bootmaker?" inquires the Marquis.

I explained to M. de la Roche-Courbette the peculiar idiosyncrasy of the artist in question, who made boots, and acted in his hours of leisure as an ecclesiastical dictionary. The Marquis listened, and shrugged his shoulders.

"You've been going on a wrong tack, mon cher. We none of us want a bishop-man-of-talent; at least I speak for myself, and I believe the Prefect and the General agree with me."

The two functionaries nod, and so does the Mayor, though not appealed to.

"What we want," continues the Marquis, "is a bishop who will do what we wish him. A good-tempered priest, five-and-fifty or thereabouts, well taught, not ambitious——"

"No striker," breaks in M. Sifflot.

"What do you mean?" asks the Marquis.

"It's in St. Paul," responds the editor, "and I suppose it means a bishop who won't deal his colleagues hard blows on the head when warring with them about the infallibility of the Pope."

"But you would give us a bishop without any soul or life in him," protests the Marquise.

"Not at all," answers the Marquis. "We should have him civil and well dressed. His cassock should be of as fine cloth as Monseigneur Fulmine's, his gold cross as handsome, and his cambric bands as white. He would preach good sermons, not too long or too short. He would give cosy levees once a week, and he would go to the Œcumenical Council

and make a smart speech or two, so as to get the name of Ville-Rosé into the history-books. Do you accept my picture?"

"Yes, we accept on those terms," exclaim the ladies together; "but where are you going to find this paragon?"

"I don't think there will be much difficulty about finding him," says the Marquis. "He is not a paragon, he is only a very ordinary type of priest. There must be several in this very diocese."

"Have you already set your eye on one?" asks the Prefect, with just the slightest shade of uneasiness in his tone.

"No, Monsieur le Préfet, but this is what I propose. Let us here, this evening, go over the list of the priests in the diocese, and if we can agree together about a likely candidate, we will draw up a petition and start off with it to Paris. Your interest and mine, and that of my brother deputy, will be enough to recommend him."

"Humph! that's not so sure. But we can try; the stake is worth the game."

"Very well, let us clear the table, and fetch pen and ink. One of the ladies shall preside; M. Jules Siffiot will no doubt act as secretary; and we will vote, as at the Palais Bourbon, by Ay and Nay. Let us see. How many of us are there? Three ladies; yourself, Monsieur le Préfet; the General, our Mayor, M. Siffiot, M. Gustave, and I—that makes nine."

"*Numero Deus impari gaudet*," mutters Jules Siffiot.

"Is my motion approved?" asks the Marquis.

"Yes," cry the three ladies, laughing and taking off their gloves. "Yes," echo the General and the Mayor. "Yes," nods the Prefect. And so, being all of one mind, we sat down in a circle round the table.

III.

I will pass over the preliminaries of our memorable debate: the unanimous election of our hostess to fill the chair, and the first hour and a half of the actual proceedings: for none of these points offer any vital interest. We had drawn up a list of all the priests of the diocese, and our method of winnowing the candidates was this: Madame la Marquise held the list in her hand and called out the names one by one. If we approved we were to say "Ay," if we disapproved "No." When it was doubtful, we debated on the subject; and if anybody chose to ask for a ballot, we voted by dropping napoleons and francs into a hat—the gold coins signifying Yes, and the silver ones No. It seems we must have had a sorry collection of ecclesiastics in our diocese, for we disposed of sixty-four candidates in half that number of minutes. After that there was a ten-minutes' discussion over a priest who wrote books and played the violoncello. He was a worthy man, but I think his musical instrument proved detrimental to him. At the ballot he was gratified with eight francs and only one napoleon. Next, there was a fierce debate over the Archdeacon, who was strongly supported by the General on the ground that he played whist better than any other man in the department. The Prefect ventured to hint that this was scarcely a qualification; and the

question being put to the vote, was decided against his reverence by six voices to three. There was some pretty skirmishing over the names of three minor canons and two fervid vicars, but in each case the ballot proved unpropitious; neither was any success achieved by a curate who devoted his leisure to the rearing of turnips. A hot strife was, however, waged during a whole half-hour over the name of a young precentor aged twenty-six, who had a voice as sweet as a barrel-organ. This gentleman was accepted on the spot by the three ladies, who were for having him consecrated without further delay. In vain was it urged by the combined logic of Prefect and Mayor, to say nothing of the General, that the gifted candidate was a great deal too young; that he must wait at least twenty years or so. This proposition was indignantly scouted; the President exercised her authority to enforce a general silence, and then made a speech which lasted a quarter of an hour. There was a reply from the Prefect, and then a counter-reply from Madame la Générale; a ballot was demanded, and, amidst a deep silence, it was proclaimed that the young precentor had missed his chance by just a single vote. After this came an episode which caused some little shame and confusion. Madame read out the name of one Abbé Bonneau, famed for his good works; and instantly there was a chorus of praise from every mouth round the table. The Abbé was an angel in disguise, a saint, a modern Chrysostom. Never since the early Christian days had such a man been seen. Half his salary was given to the poor; if he had a loaf he shared it, if he had a coat he lent it, if he had a penny-piece in his purse he cheerfully gave it away. The anecdotes we knew of this good man's charity were so many, and the volubility with which we delivered them was so great, that the President was obliged at last to strike her fan on the table, and to request us to speak each in our turn. This we did, waxing eloquent with our theme, and declaring, every one of us with touching earnestness, that it was a sin and a disgrace that the Government did not more often choose such excellent men as this Abbé Bonneau to be bishops and pastors of the fold. The unanimity was so complete that the matter seemed definitely settled, and the ballot that had been asked for a mere formality.

The hat was passed round with a pocket-handkerchief covering it, each of us dropped in his coin, but all appeared to feel so certain of the result, that there was none of the usual excitement when the hat came back to the chair. What was not our stupefaction, however, when the President, upon raising the handkerchief, announced, in a somewhat shemefaced tone, that the Abbé Bonneau—the excellent, the saintly, the angelic Abbé Bonneau—had been treated to nine black balls! On hearing this declaration we hung down our heads and became dumb as fish, every one of us being convicted of hypocrisy. I suppose it is that we none of us had such a deep-rooted admiration for stainless virtue as we professed to feel; or, rather, that we feared to take for bishop a man whose countless perfections would remind us so constantly of our own shortcomings.

I shall not dwell upon the half-hour of almost silent voting that

followed the Bonneau incident, but hasten on at once to the moment when, after going right through our list, we found ourselves at last with only three more candidates, each of whom had already triumphed in a preliminary ballot, and now awaited the competitive test of a second. They were much of a muchness these three ecclesiastics. They would all have made excellent bishops, and had they been weighed in that famous pair of scales where so many of us, it seems, are found wanting, I fancy it would have been a delicate business to decide as to which was the heaviest or the lightest. One of them was the incumbent of the Church of Ste. Clorinde at Ville-Rosé; another was a canon at the cathedral; the third was none other than the dean himself.

This last candidate was, like most French deans, a very amiable little man. Reports said that he might have been a bishop over and over again, had he liked to exert himself. But, somehow, he preferred his oaken stall to an episcopal throne, and when pressed to ask for a mitre invariably exclaimed:—"Nenni, mes amis. If I become a Monseigneur shall I sleep better than I do at present, shall I look better, shall I dine better?" And when his friends answered him no, for it was, indeed, impossible to sleep, or to look, or to dine better, than did the little dean, then he smiled good-humouredly and said:—"There, you see, I have nothing to gain, and it would be tempting Providence to change my lot." One of the most winning characteristics of this little man's nature was this, that he never disagreed with anybody, and would thus, as a bishop, have been of infinite value to the Prefect. If M. de Fustige had said to him, "My dear Bishop, I hope you will exert all your influence for the Government candidate," he would certainly have promised to do so, and, what is more, would have kept his word, unless he had met the opposition candidate afterwards. In this latter case, however, the chances are two to one that he would have melted into tears at the recital of some republican grievance, and have voted for the liberals with all his heart. Everybody would have liked to see the Dean of Ville-Rosé become bishop. He had such an honest face and such good round eyes. But, then, we knew it was no use to think about the matter; and so, after lamenting all round that he should have so little taste for gorgeous vestments and violet cassocks, we passed on to his two competitors.

The first of these gentlemen was a priest of the muscular Christian school. His parish of Ste. Clorinde lay on the outskirts of Ville-Rosé, and on Sunday evenings after vespers, when the weather was fine, he might always be seen playing bowls with his parishioners in the field adjoining his vicarage. There was no conceit about him. His playmates were the blacksmith and the miller, the dairyman and the cow-boy. Anybody who liked to come was free to join in his game, and although the worthy man never stooped to, nor tolerated familiarity, yet he had always a pleasant word to say to everybody, and a frank, cheerful manner that made people glad to talk with him. L'Abbé Gourde was one of those priests who do an immense deal of good, and do it in the right way. He lived the life of his poorer parishioners, understood their requirements,

and enjoyed their confidence—which is the best praise that can be said of him, for to win the confidence of French peasants is much less easy work than it seems. With regard to political opinions it is not very sure that he had any. As a priest the Abbé was necessarily opposed to everything in the shape of radicalism; but it is doubtful whether his enthusiasm for the Empire, and its peculiar code of ethics, was either very deep or very genuine. However, at the elections he always voted for the Imperialist candidates and advised his flock to do the same. He was aware that a liberal priest in a diocese governed by an autocratic bishop, and in a department ruled over by a despotic prefect, leads but a sorry time of it.

L'Abbé Gourde's last competitor was a man of different, though not quite opposite, stamp. The *curé* of Sainte Clorinde was stout, hale, plain-spoken, a sound scholar and a shrewd reasoner. Monsieur le Chanoine Ponceau may have been a shrewd reasoner, and it is certain that he was an accomplished scholar; but he was neither hale, nor stout, nor excessively plain-spoken. In the matter of plain speech he rather took after the Dean. He agreed with people—and this, not with a crafty end in view, but simply because he abhorred discussions, and liked to keep on good terms with everybody. He was a man very honourable in all his acts, and exquisitely courteous in his demeanour. He detested everything that was shabby, vulgar, or mean; and despised villany of all sorts, rather as something dirty than as something wicked. In his sermons—which, by the way, were models of elegant French—he never appealed to any other feelings than those of honour and good taste. He used to point out that such and such things were unworthy and unbecoming; trying to make sinners ashamed of themselves, instead of attempting to frighten them with talk of hell. Perhaps his discourses had no very great effect upon the more thick-headed of his hearers, who did not understand what good taste was; but they used to make many so-called gentlemen look uncomfortable, and cause many selfish gentlewomen to fidget very uneasily on their seats. Canon Ponceau was extremely popular, however, as courteous men mostly are; and he was equally esteemed by all parties, because on no account whatever would he ever meddle in politics. "*Par le temps qui court la politique est un jeu malpropre,*" he used to say in his quiet voice, "*et je n'aime pas me salir les mains.*"

Over these two candidates we debated for a full hour with infinite animation and no lack of eloquence:—

"I am for l'Abbé Gourde," said the General at last. "He is one of your downright men, such as I like. If you put a mitre on his head I'll warrant he soon becomes as great a bishop as Monseigneur Fulmine."

"I think he will," answered the Prefect, "and that's just what I am afraid of."

"Why afraid?" asks the Mayor.

"Because, Monsieur le Maire, it will be I who will have the work of keeping him in order; and mounting guard over a bishop is no sinecure, I assure you."

"I don't think M. Gourde looks quite as a bishop should," interposes the Marchioness, "he wears horribly thick boots."

"If that is all I daresay he will buy a thinner pair to quiet the consciences of his diocese," remarks the dry-humoured M. Siffiot.

"But he takes snuff, too," expostulates Madame la Générale, "and out of a penny box, with a leather thong for a spring."

"My dear, if you like to invest ten napoleons in buying him a gold one, I daresay he will accept it," grunts out the General.

"I think the discussion is straggling beyond its natural limits," observes the Marquis. "Let us go to the vote on the question as to which of these two priests will represent us best at the Ecumenical Council, and allow us to lead the quietest life afterwards. My man is Monsieur le Chanoine. He will make a scholarly speech that will be printed for its excellent Latin, but which will offend nobody. After the Council he will come back here, and rule the diocese in peace, breaking no one's head, nor exposing his own to be broken."

"Yes, and he's such a perfect gentleman," chimes in the Marchioness. "He always looks so neat, and well dressed."

"Yes, he wears thin boots," observes the Editor.

"Monsieur Jules Siffiot, I call you to order; you seem to think that the personal appearance of a bishop is of no moment whatever."

"Nay, Madame, but can we never hope to walk the road to preferment in clump soles? I am concerned in the matter, because my own boots are thick."

"As a man of the world, M. Siffiot, you ought to know that the way to preferment is not a road but a carpeted staircase," exclaims Madame la Préfète, laughing.

"Then the carpet must have an uncommon number of holes," responds the Editor, "for more than half my friends have cracked their shins over it."

"Come, gentlemen, let us discuss the matter seriously," interrupts the General, making a final appeal for the plain-speaking Abbé Gourde.

"Look here, Monsieur le Préfet, the Curé of Sainte Clorinde always votes for Government, whereas the Canon votes for nobody."

"Yes, General, I know the Curé of Sainte Clorinde votes for us; but it is not so sure that the Bishop of Ville-Rosé would. Take the breeching off a mettlesome horse and he not unfrequently kicks over the traces. Believe me, we shall be wiser if we select the Canon."

This opinion of the Prefect's definitely settled the question. "I think poor M. Gourde will only have two votes," said the Marquise, taking up the ballot-hat. "Ladies and gentlemen, has anybody anything more to say?"

"One word, Madame la Présidente," cries the Prefect. "I think we have an additional reason for selecting the Canon in this fact, that he is well connected and in good odour at Court. We might have some difficulty in getting M. Gourde appointed; but I do not think there will be much trouble in obtaining the appointment of M. Ponceau."

"In that case I give in," says the General.

"So do I," echoes M. Siffot. "If his reverence has friends at court to help him over the holes in the stair-carpet, poor M. Gourde is handicapped, and I see no chance for him."

"We will vote then," says the Marquise; "those who are for M. Ponceau put in gold, those for M. Gourde silver."

The hat went round as before, the coins were dropped in, and the next moment M. le Chanoine Ponceau was declared unanimously elected.

IV.

The election over, an adjournment to the supper-room was voted, and the health of our bishop-designate, proposed by Madame la Marquise and seconded by Madame la Préfète, was drunk in brimmers of champagne. Certes, if many hear no good of themselves when they lay their ears next a keyhole, others, more fortunate, might reap a few hours' exquisite bliss in listening from behind a door to what is being said of them within. I fancy M. Ponceau, for instance, would have found no reason to complain had some considerate spirit lifted him by the hair of his head and deposited him privately under our supper-table. For ninety minutes or so without cease, his trumpet was bravely blown for him to the tuneful accompaniment of jingling glasses and clattering silver forks, and when, at last, we rose from table (it being then 1.30 A.M.) a motion was carried to the effect that we should set to work at once upon the petition to Government, and not separate until all the preliminaries had been concluded.

So as not to lose time, however, the drawing up of the petition was confided to M. Jules Siffot, who sat down to the task at once, and in less than half an hour had indited an address remarkable at once for its truth, its elevation of language, and its pathetic sentiments.

I subjoin this valuable document:—

TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE.

MONSIEUR LE MINISTRE,—

WE, the undersigned inhabitants of the diocese of Ville-Rosé respectfully approach your Excellency in the hope that the recent heavy bereavement from which we are suffering will give us a claim to your sympathies and your attention. Your Excellency is aware that the genial Christian virtues which so pre-eminently distinguished our late Bishop rendered him inexpressibly dear to his flock. His patience, his modesty, his generous solicitude for all in sorrow, and, above all, the saintly humility which characterized the whole conduct of his life, gave him a place in our hearts such as had never been held before, save by his Majesty the Emperor, her Majesty the Empress, and his Highness the Prince Imperial. Under these circumstances it is but natural, Monsieur le Ministre, that in the first flush of our profound grief we should earnestly desire that the Bishop who is to succeed to Monseigneur's place in our diocese should also be the recipient of his wealthy heritage in our affections. Well knowing, as we do, how deep is the attention, how anxious the care, and how equitable the spirit which his Majesty's Government always brings to bear upon the selection of dignitaries for the Church or State, we freely confess that we could not do better than await the appointment which it may please his Majesty's

Government to make, confident that the appointment will be of a nature to satisfy our most cherished hopes and fill us with the liveliest gratitude. At the same time, should his Majesty's Government have not yet made choice of a candidate, we would most humbly venture to pray your Excellency to consider the claims of Monsieur le Chanoine Ponceau, a priest who seems to have been especially fashioned by Providence to pick up the mantle of Monseigneur Fulmine. Far be it from us to have recourse to any step which should seem to your Excellency to savour of presumption. But in the interests of truth we think it right to state that ever since the day when our late bishop left us, there has been a unanimous and heartfelt hope in the breast of every inhabitant of the diocese that the Government would select M. l'Abbé Ponceau. Children lip the name of our beloved Canon in the streets, mothers bless him, old men pray for him; his reputation for goodness, abnegation and charity is scarcely inferior to that of Monseigneur Fulmine. Shall we add that, like all the truly virtuous men of this land, M. Ponceau is deeply devoted to that Great Sovereign who has bestowed upon France seventeen years of uninterrupted order, and whose reign shines in the chronicles of our country with the beaming light of incomparable glory? No, your Excellency has divined this, for had it been otherwise, M. Ponceau's name would not have had the support of the undersigned petitioners, who beg to subscribe themselves, with deepest respect,

Monsieur le Ministre,

Your Excellency's most humble, faithful, and obedient Servants.

"One would think you had done nothing but write petitions to Government all your life," says the Marquise, as M. Jules Siffiot finishes the reading of his composition.

"It's the official candidate style," answers M. Siffiot modestly. "I learned it from reading Monsieur le Marquis's addresses to his constituents and Monsieur le Préfet's speeches in favour of Monsieur le Marquis. It is a good style, rich and comprehensive, and has the merit of swallowing the whole leek at once without making any bones about it."

The Prefect and the Marquis look at each other and grin. Madame la Marquise raps M. Siffiot on the fingers; but the petition is assented to nevertheless, and the only thing that now remains to be done is to arrange about obtaining the signatures. The General promises that two hundred men out of the garrison shall sign on the morrow morning, the Prefect will see that a like number of free and independent citizens shall affix their names in the forenoon, and the Mayor engages to collect signatures from all the maimed, halt, and sick in the hospital and asylums.

"What we want now," says Madame la Générale, "is a few of the clergy. It would look well if we had the signatures of a couple of hundred priests."

"Yes, it would," assents the Marquis; "but the only way to get them would be to convince each of the two hundred that he was petitioning in favour of himself; and that is a stroke of diplomacy which would require more time than we can spare."

"What do you say to doing this instead?" asks the Marquise. "It's an idea that has just occurred to me. Suppose we go to the Abbé Bonneau, and get him to accompany you to Paris with the petition? He is so good that he would do it willingly, and the effect produced would be excellent, for the dear man is known everywhere as a saint."

"Yes, but let us hope the Minister will appreciate his merits better

than we seem to have done," rejoins M. Jules Siffiot, laughing at the recollection of the nine black balls.

"I am certain he will," says the Marchioness, positively. "I was talking with his Excellency one day about this very Abbé Bonneau, and he told me the old man was the very best priest in France."

"And so he is very likely," answers Madame la Préfète; "but, after all, I don't think we can be blamed for not having voted for him. He would never do for a bishop; he would give all his clothes away to the poor, and leave himself not so much as his mitre to go to church in——"

The Prefect takes out his watch. "It's getting late," he interposes; "it's already past three. Let us settle our plans at once. Madame's idea about the Abbé Bonneau is a good one. Somebody had better see him without delay."

"That can be done whilst you are collecting the signatures," says the Marquis; "but I think the best plan of action will be for us all to meet at the prefecture at two, after the petition has been signed. We can then go together, and call upon Canon Ponceau, to tell him what we have been doing; and after that go to the Abbé Bonneau, who can take the five-o'clock train with us for Paris. If we manage things promptly, we shall be back here in thirty-six hours from this time, with M. Ponceau's appointment already signed and sealed."

This proposal was approved, and just as the first gleam of morning twilight was dawning, the guests of M. le Marquis left the Château de la Roche-Courbette, well pleased with having, as they fancied, manufactured a bishop, and promising to meet again at two.

V.

I will do the Prefect and the General this justice, that after a short hour or two's sleep, they set to work like men. The General, as soon as his breakfast was over, had two hundred rank and file marched up to his house, and explained to them, through the window, that they would have to come up, six at a time, into the vestibule, and sign a paper that was laid on the table; those who could not write would get those who could to sign for them. He added that it was about a new bishop, and asked them, for the form of the thing, whether they saw any objection. This idea tickled them so vastly, that they all began laughing together; upon which the General laughed too, and went back to take his coffee, announcing, however, before going, that any soldier who made blots should have two days in the *Salle de Police*. The Prefect, whose high position rendered it unadvisable that he should take too ostensibly prominent a part in the whole affair, deferred the task of collecting signatures to his secretary. This young gentleman, who was of an imaginative turn, forthwith went down to the lower end of the town, where some Government works were in progress, and presenting the workmen with some sheets of paper, told them laconically to write their names down; which they did, submissively, one by one, without asking questions. Fifty signatures having been obtained in this way, the

secretary paid domiciliary visits to three girls'-schools, where he undertook a brief panegyric of Canon Ponceau, paid a few compliments to the governesses, and obtained as many signatures as there were ladies. A hundred and ten, however, still remained to be found, and the young gentleman was beginning to feel tired. He accordingly chartered a small boy, to whom he gave a franc and a ream of foolscap, on the first page of which he wrote, in big letters, "*Votez pour Ponceau candidat electique.*" "You'll go," said he to the small boy, "and get a hundred and ten workmen to sign their names on to the blank pages. If they ask who Ponceau is, you will tell them he is a cousin of M. Henri Rochefort. If they want to know what *electique* signifies, you will say it means good dinners." An hour afterwards the small boy returned with three hundred names, many of which were interlarded with such appropriate exclamations as "*La Liberté ou la Mort!*" "*A bas les Tyrans!*" "*Vive la Lanterne!*" "*A Chaillot les Prêtres!*" &c. &c. The honest signatories had thought that their votes were required on behalf of a "friend and brother," and had testified to the warmth of their sentiments in the usual way. "Bah!" laughed the secretary; "it doesn't much matter. Petitions sent to Ministers are always thrown into the waste-paper basket, and nobody ever thinks of looking at the signatures." And upon this he gave the small boy another franc, and walked back to the prefecture, pleased enough with his morning's work.

The Mayor, meanwhile, had been as busy as the General and the Prefect's secretary. He had gone recruiting suffrages in the charitable institutions under his control, and had obtained them as easily as he had at the last political election, when he had mustered such a fine collection of cripples to vote for the Prefect's candidate. But by this time the tout-ing and canvassing in different quarters had begun to excite attention. Little by little the truth leaked out, and as news spreads fast in small towns where the inhabitants have nothing to do all day but count their fingers and thumbs, it very quickly became known that the authorities were starting a petition for having Canon Ponceau appointed bishop. We, then, had a reproduction of that eternally instructive story of Panurge's sheep. Seeing some of their fellow-townsmen signing their names on sheets of paper, divers ambitious citizens became possessed with the desire of signing too. Many men and women who could not possibly have the smallest interest in seeing M. Ponceau elected, hurried up feverishly to add their names to the petition. As the morning advanced and the rumours waxed more persistent, quiet people left their houses and went down into the streets to ask what the matter was. The day was a lovely one, and the cathedral bells, as it happened, were ringing full volley in honour of some saint. Of course this was somehow associated with the talk about M. le Chanoine Ponceau, and there were plenty who believed that the jubilant Canon was already treating himself to an exulting peal as thanksgiving for his appointment. Gradually a crowd began to gather round the door of the Mairie, where a copy of the petition was displayed for signatures, and, before long, the police had to be called into requisi-

tion to form the gathering into a long *queue*, and only admit signitaries three at a time. By twelve o'clock the Mairie had received a thousand names; by one, five hundred more had been added; and at two, when the nine promoters of the petition met at the prefecture according to arrangement, the crowd had already grown enthusiastic, and were for going and giving M. le Chanoine an ovation in front of his house.

"Our idea seems to have taken root," began the Marquis as soon as we were all collected.

"And what a noise it is making!" exclaimed the Marchioness, looking out of the window in astonishment at the tumultuous assemblage below.

"Yes," says the Prefect with evident uneasiness. "I begin to wish we had let the business alone. If the Government have already thought of some one for the appointment, they will not thank me for having got up all this uproar."

Madame la Préfète bit her lips, and looked out of the window with the Marquise: "Is there no way of stopping them?" she asked anxiously, not at all liking the idea of a quarrel between her husband and the Government.

"*Vive Madame la Préfète!*" cries an urchin in the crowd, who has perceived the two ladies.

"*Vive Rochefort!*" yelps another.

"*Ohé Lambert!*"

"*Vive Raspail! Hop! O La Lanterne!*"

"*A bas les Préfets de Ratapoil!*"

"Confound them, there they go," mutters the Prefect, with a shrug of the shoulders. "I ought to have foreseen all this."

"Well, all we've got to do now is to breast it," observes Jules Siffiot resolutely. "I think, too, we ought to go and call on Canon Ponceau at once, for he won't be able to understand what on earth all this means."

"To be sure, we have been forgetting the Canon; he must be half out of his wits by this time," exclaims the Marquis.

"We had better all go there together," says the Prefect. "When we have seen him we will look up the Abbé Bonneau, and then go straight off to Paris. Minutes are becoming precious. By hook or crook we must get Ponceau appointed."

The ladies adjusted their bonnets, the men put on their hats, and the whole party of nine of us went down the staircase and sallied out into the Square together. With such a crowd as there was it was impossible that we could pass unnoticed. The Prefect, the General, the Mayor, and the Marquis, were recognized immediately. The shouting and chaffing ceased. There was an exchange of salutations, a falling back right and left; and then the whole crowd, re-forming itself in our rear, followed us in silence to see where we were going. So long as we were in the market-place the quiet continued; but when it became visible that we were making for the church precincts where the Canons lived, our escort took it as a matter of course that we were going to pay a visit of congra-

tulation to M. Ponceau, and burst out into cheers, rare and faint at first, but growing gradually louder and more general, until they culminated into an immense and frantic roar when we finally stopped before the Canon's house :—

"For Heaven's sake, M. le Préfet, what does all this mean?" stammered M. Ponceau, opening the door to us himself, and showing us into his parlour. He was very pale and agitated, and trembled whilst speaking.

"There's been a mob there all the morning," he added, excitedly, without waiting for an answer. "Every time I go to the door they shake their hats at me and shout. I can't learn what it is they want?"

"We have come to explain," said the Prefect, unable to help smiling at the Canon's startled appearance, "but we owe you an apology for not having come earlier. The secret is this, my dear M. Ponceau, we are using our influence to try and get you made a bishop, and the people somehow have got wind of our scheme."

"Me a bishop!" exclaimed M. Ponceau, standing stock-still, with his two hands on his breast, and looking at us with perfect stupefaction.

We had not counted on his showing so much surprise, and his emotion rather disconcerted us.

"You don't mean to say you would refuse a bishopric?" says the Prefect amazed.

M. Ponceau passed his hand across his brow and sat down without for the moment making any reply. He seemed not yet able to realize what he had heard, and took time to collect himself.

"Excuse me for this nervousness," he replied at last, speaking in the soft voice habitual to him. "The events of the morning have rather unsettled me, and your communication is so unexpected that I do not yet know what to say to it."

"We should all be so glad to see you a bishop!" observes the Marquise gently.

"You have done me a great honour," answers M. Ponceau, with quiet earnestness; "an honour such as it needs a lifetime of gratitude to repay. But forgive me if I tell you that the honour is not one I ever coveted. I know most men say this when they are raised to dignities; but with me it is the truth. I had grown to love the quiet life I lived here amidst my books, and I have passed that age when the prospect of entering upon a career of ambition could compensate me for throwing off long-cherished and familiar habits. What you offer me is a crown, Monsieur le Préfet, and crowns are always heavy when our heads have turned grey."

"Still, you must not refuse," pleads the Marquise.

"Nor do I, Madame," answers the priest. "I should be ashamed to decline an honour without having a better excuse than that it seemed to me irksome."

"That's well spoken, sir," says the General. "For my part, I don't think a man has any right to refuse honours; unless, that is, he feels

too weak to bear them ; which I am sure," adds the old soldier politely, "is not the case with you."

"We mustn't be going too far, however, and raising false hopes," interposes the Prefect, recalled to a sudden sense of realities by some more cheering outside. "Mind we have not got you your bishopric yet ; M. Ponceau, we are going to Paris about it to-day."

Here the Marquise and the Prefect's wife explained to the Canon how a petition had been drawn up for presentation to the Government, and how it was already covered with several thousand signatures. M. Ponceau listened and seemed touched. He had been quite sincere in asserting that he loved his present mode of life and was loath to leave it ; but a man must be made of wood who can hear unmoved that thousands of men are exerting themselves to do him honour, and are hailing his name with shouts of good-will. No doubt had the amiable Canon been able to peep behind the scenes and see how the comedy of the petition had been started, and what was the real intrinsic value of most of the cheers he heard, he would have felt a considerable number of illusions abandon him. But happily for him he could not see behind the scenes, and thus had every reason to look proud and pleased at the flattering recital that was made him. To have been appointed bishop by the sole will of the Emperor or one of his Ministers, would not have gratified him over much ; but to be raised to the episcopal chair by the unanimous voice of his diocese was an honour so great that, being really modest, M. Ponceau could not help asking himself what he had done to deserve it.

"Mind, we shall expect to hear some splendid speeches from you at the Œcumenical Council ; where of course you will go to represent our diocese," smiles the Marquise.

"Depend upon it, Madame, that it will be my constant effort to try and repay the kindness shown me by representing Ville-Rosé worthily." And as he spoke a flash of generous ambition gleamed before the Canon's eyes. He fancied he saw himself standing amongst the bishops at St. Peter's and amazing them by his eloquence ; and the thought of the pride which his diocese might feel at his triumphs, gave him the pleasure which gladdens an honourable man at the hope of repaying a benefactor.

But with all this it was getting time to be gone. The cathedral clock had chimed half-past three, and we had no more than an hour and a half before the train started. We accordingly took our leave of the Canon, who accompanied us to the door, no longer alarmed now by the tumult which burst out afresh as soon as we reappeared. He thanked us cordially for what we were doing for him, and shook hands with us all round.

"Good-by, M. Ponceau," says the Prefect. "I hope this time tomorrow we may be back here with good news."

"You start at once ?" asks the Canon from his doorway.

"Yes ; at least we are going to call on the Abbé Bonneau first. We intend taking him with us to help plead your cause."

"Dear me ! but I am afraid you will be disappointed of finding him," answers M. Ponceau. "I do not think he is here."

"Not here!" cries the Prefect, turning round.

"No. I called at his house yesterday, and they told me he had gone to Paris."

This was a strange piece of news, that took us all aback. A journey to Paris on the part of the Abbé Bonneau was a thing so utterly unprecedented, that occurring at this particular juncture it struck us as something ominous. The Abbé lived like an anchorite, never stirring beyond his parish. What could he possibly want in Paris, and at this moment too? We mused upon this question as we went along, and could find no feasible reply to it. The crowd, which had become perfectly convinced by this time that M. Ponceau had either been, or was just on the point of being, appointed bishop, followed us as closely as ever, and thought, no doubt, to give us pleasure by cheering and leaping, as if the Millennium had come. Some of the smaller citizens turned somersaults in the mud, to mark their keen appreciation of M. Ponceau's virtues; a few more struck up *Partant pour la Syrie*, to testify to their loyalty towards the Imperial dynasty. At the prefecture we stopped to take our carpet-bags, and the famous petition, which had swelled in bulk to the size of a fine folio volume. In the excited state of public opinion we judged it scarcely prudent to have carriages to carry us to the station; for once a crowd has taken into its head to be enthusiastic, there is no knowing to what lengths it may go. It was just as likely as not that the mob, having nothing else to do, might insist upon unharnessing our horses and dragging us in triumph round the market-place. We set out on foot, therefore, as previously, the ladies going with us to see us off, and five footmen marching behind with the luggage. On our way we called at the Abbé Bonneau's house, a small cottage with a thatched roof and a single chimney-pot. It had occurred to us that perhaps the Abbé had returned, or that at all events we might learn why he had gone. But we found him still away, and we could gather nothing from his housekeeper but that he had started off suddenly with his curate a few days ago upon receipt of a large letter in a blue envelope from Paris. This was too vague to help us much, but when we had turned away, the old woman, as if suddenly remembering an important clue, called out to us at the top of her voice that the letter had no stamp to it, but that there had yet been nothing to pay. This news caused the Prefect to arch his eyebrows, and the General to utter a formidable "Humph!" for the letters with no stamps on them and nothing to pay are usually the products of Government offices, and what the Abbé Bonneau could have to do with such, we were at a loss to understand.

Upon arriving at the station we found that we had still twenty minutes before us, and that a train was just coming in from Paris. We were all silent, pondering over the Abbé Bonneau's mysterious absence. The Marquise suggested he must have had a legacy. Madame la Générale wondered whether he had not been summoned to hear a lecture from the Minister of Justice upon his charitable prodigalities, which left him often with scarcely shoes to his feet. His Excellency the Minister was

known to be a great stickler about the clergy maintaining a becoming appearance, and it was just possible he might have wished to inform M. Bonneau that a clergyman, with holes in his boots, is an object deserving of censure. We were in the midst of our speculations and doubts, when the Paris train came rumbling into the station, and whom should we see looking out of one of the windows, with his usually placid face, but this very Abbé Bonneau. It escaped none of us that he was travelling in a first-class carriage, and that his curate was sporting a new hat and a pair of black gloves, unaccustomed luxuries.

"Mon cher Monsieur Bonneau," says the Préfet, running forward and holding out his hand, "how delighted I am to see you."

"This is really very good of you, Monsieur le Préfet," falters the old man with beaming looks. "I didn't know the news had travelled so fast, but, to be sure, I had forgotten the telegraph. Thank you all kindly for coming to meet me; it's very thoughtful of you."

"Ahem!" coughs the Prefect, not quite understanding. "I suppose you have had a legacy, my dear Abbé. So Madame la Marquise thought, and we all beg to offer our congratulations. But, ahem! we are going to ask a favour of you, and we hope——"

"Anything in the world I can do to oblige you, Monsieur le Préfet," breaks in the poor old Abbé, perplexed.

"Well, it's just this," continues the Prefect, "and you will excuse us for being so abrupt, but the fact is, we have very little time before us. We have been getting up a petition in the diocese to have Canon Ponceau made Bishop of Ville-Rosé. We are going now to Paris to carry this petition to the Minister of Justice, and we want you to accompany us——"

"O Mon Dieu!" stammers the old Abbé, becoming terribly red. "Then you have not heard the news yet."

"What news?" asks the Prefect, breathless.

"Why—why—O dear me, how sorry I am for all this—Monsieur le Préfet, why I have just come from Paris—from the Minister of Justice, and the vacancy is filled up."

"Filled up!" cries the Prefect, aghast; "and by whom?" But he had no need to await a reply, for the Abbé's curate coming up at that moment, took off his hat, and said respectfully—

"The luggage is in the fly, *Monseigneur*."

Our new Bishop was the Abbé Bonneau.

The King of Sweden's Poems.*

THAT the present ruler of Sweden and Norway ranks among the most accomplished of living European sovereigns is a fact probably familiar to a large number of our readers, but few even of these are, we daresay, exactly aware of the true character and extent of his accomplishments. It may be, therefore, interesting to state that one of his chief claims to the distinction which has, by general consent, been assigned to him, exists in the circumstance that, although born a monarch, he has chosen to become a denizen, like ourselves, of the Republic of Letters, and has given proof of his fitness for such a citizenship by the publication of one or two volumes of poetry—the works that now lie before us, and to which, as we presume they are in great measure unknown in England, we propose briefly directing the attention of our readers. In a singularly modest preface to one of these volumes, the royal poet informs us that its contents had been in private circulation for some time before they were given to the world. Several of the poems, however, having obtained publicity through a French translation entitled *Légendes et Poèmes Scandinaves traduits du Suédois, par G. B. de Lagrèze, Conseiller à la Cour Impériale de Pau*, the author had no longer any scruples about permitting their appearance in the original form. The first-named volume contains the two longer poems, *Heidi* and *En Vikingsaga*, along with a number of shorter compositions; and the second-named volume is a small collection of songs and occasional verses, published about two years afterwards.

Whatever opinion may be held with regard to the abstract merits of King Carl the XV.'s poetry, there can be little doubt entertained as to its comparative value and significance. There exists in it abundant proof that its author has been endowed by nature with no inconsiderable portion of the divine gift of song; and, anxious as we are to avoid aught resembling exaggerated praise, we do not hesitate to affirm that in many passages, more especially of the larger volume, there are vivid traces of something greatly beyond the ordinary facile flow of verse, which is too often deemed sufficient to entitle its composer to the illustrious name of poet. The royal author, indeed, wields evident mastery over the noble and sonorous language in which he writes; but there is more, a good deal more than this: there is a certain graceful power, a certain pictorial beauty, in his description of men and things, his portraiture of character and landscapes, which, if we do not greatly mistake, appertains to what is absolutely essential in all poetry that really deserves the appellation. *Languor* and

* 1. *En Samling Dikter*. Af C. F. Stockholm: Samson and Wallin. 2. *Smärre Dikter*. Af. C. Stockholm: Samson and Wallin.

diffuseness are, it cannot be denied, occasionally perceptible, and we can also mark at times the presence, in the shorter poems, of a sentimentalism that almost verges on morbidity; but a sound and healthy objectiveness distinguishes the longer compositions, and it is only here and there that the smaller poems betray the presence of an unduly subjective element. There is, moreover, one thing which is their prominent and very pleasant characteristic: they are, although pictorial, wonderfully free from the vice of over-done word-painting, which to so painful an extent impairs much of the poetry, otherwise commendable, produced at the present day. There is no extravagant opulence of diction and illustration; the figures employed are, although perfectly appropriate, for the main part chaste and simple; and the feeling evoked in the mind of the reader is consequently that of calm repose, instead of exhausting confusion and bewilderment. Such, at least, is the impression left by their perusal on ourselves.

Were additional evidence requisite to prove the loyal and loving zeal with which the Bernadotte dynasty has ever striven to identify itself with all that is distinctively Scandinavian, and distinctively Swedish in particular, it would be found in these poems, the chief of which rest upon a thorough northern basis, and are supremely redolent in every page of Scandinavian thought and feeling. The late King Oscar was carefully trained by his sagacious father in accordance with Swedish ideas and usages, and thereby fitted as Crown Prince for the duties so ably discharged by him after his ascension to the throne; and his own appreciation of the literature of the country over which he ruled appears to have descended in yet larger measure to his son, the present monarch. In the spirit that pervades some portions of King Carl's poetry we may trace the influence of the southern blood of the successful soldier of the Empire, of Eugene Beauharnais and the Bavarian princess he espoused; but its prevalent tone is northern,—a striking proof that hereditary characteristics, however powerful, have not been strong enough to counteract the sway of early education and development. But, be this as it may, the fact is unquestionable that in these poems the Scandinavian element preponderates, for not merely are *Heidi* and the *Vikingasaga* founded on themes drawn from early Swedish history, and not merely do they display a singular acquaintance with the grand mythology of the Eddas, but the whole treatment of the subject, in the case of either poem, is thoroughly in keeping with the manner of the Sagas, if we except one point, to which we shall presently refer. Those familiar with modern Swedish literature will at once comprehend our meaning when we state that it is to the school of the "Goths," and not the "Phosphorists," that King Carl emphatically belongs. Tegnér's *Frithiofsaga*—that beautiful, but, as we humbly conceive, somewhat overrated poem—appears to have been his foremost model; and, although there is quite enough of originality in *Heidi* and the *Vikingasaga* to redeem them from the charge of aught in the shape of servile imitation, the reader is too frequently reminded of Tegnér's defects as well as of his excellences. For, in the Swedish

monarch's poetry, we find the passion of love, which plays so prominent a part in the two works just mentioned, arrayed at times in a garb unduly modernized—represented as nourishing itself on vague self-reflection and mere romantic sentiment, instead of appearing as the sound and active, yet lasting, influence, in which form it is portrayed to us in the old songs and stories of northern Europe. Now, as has been so often pointed out,—among others by Heiberg, the ablest of the Danish critics,—it is this very thing which constitutes the leading blemish in Tegnér's most celebrated work. Frithiof woos Ingeborg, and Ingeborg returns his suit, in the style of a youth and maiden of the nineteenth century, and not in accordance with our idea of love-making as practised by the heathen Scandinavians at the early period when Frithiof and his mistress lived. King Carl, following in the Bishop of Vexjö's footsteps, has unfortunately allowed the defect in question,—one of the few vices impairing the immortal *Frithiofsaga*,—to deface, in some measure, his two larger works; but, with this exception, the course of the narrative and the representation of characters are true to the spirit of the ancient north. Let us, however, now give a brief account of *Heidi* and the *Vikingasaga*, accompanied by a few translations.

The first of these poems, while containing numerous specimens of the most varied versification, is mainly written in a somewhat peculiar and rhymeless, yet, in the Swedish, sufficiently musical measure, which nevertheless loses not a little of its easy flow when we attempt to reproduce it in our own language. Still, as we wish to give as faithful an English rendering as possible in the brief extracts we have chosen, we prefer adhering with all fidelity to the measure of the original verse.

There lieth a lake in the rock-girded Norland,
The shores of old Sweden are washed by its wavelets,
And Mälär 'tis called, the fairest of waters;
Full oft have its praises been sung by the Scalds.
So Saga recounts how Gefion the stately,
Announcing the northward advance of the Aser,
Was gifted by Gylfe the aged with land,
"As much as her plough ere sunset could sever
And cast from the shore;" how Gefion compelled
The four young Jättar to yield her obedience,
And draw, like unswerving steeds, her plough,
While Gefion guided it, helped by Vala.
And so she ploughed, from the groves of Sweden,
The soil which far in the south she gave
To Dana, the beech-clad, blossoming Zealand.
But fairest of all the bays of Mälär,
Is Vångarn, green to the water's verge.
How glance the rounded crowns of the beech-trees
Deep in the lake; how rivulets murmur
Among the blossoms their song of spring!
At eventide there the cliffs in the distance
Gleam golden through the shadows; while Delling,
Keen glancing out of the purple orient,
Awakens Nature from nightly slumber;
How sweet to listen to Saga then!

Gylfe, the father of Heidi, is an ancient Swedish monarch, far advanced in life at the time when the Aser, led by Odin, approach the North in their march of conquest and triumph from their distant Asiatic home. Our author has adopted the theory of some mythologists, who believe in the existence of a two-fold Odin; the second being a pontiff-warrior, assuming the appellation and laying claim to the attributes of a previous Odin, long received and worshipped as a god. Hence, throughout the poem, we find as active agents, on the one hand the heavenly Odin, with his Aser (or deities of Valhalla), and on the other hand, the earthly Odin, with *his* Aser, or attendant warriors,—a circumstance at first view rather perplexing to readers ignorant of the hypothesis to which we have just referred. That hypothesis we believe to be untenable as a supposed fact; but it may, of course, be quite legitimately used for poetic purposes, and the author has thus employed it with no small measure of success. It is at the time when Gylfe, bowed down by age and infirmity, calmly contemplates impending death, that Odin—the second Odin, the pontiff-warrior, be it borne in mind—enters Sweden at the head of his Asiatic host. Heidi, a true maiden of the North, blending with a woman's profoundest tenderness the heroism pre-eminently characteristic of the ancient Scandinavian females, advises her father to resist the invaders, saying that she herself will engage to lead his subjects to the field. But the wise old sovereign smiles at her proffered services, and tells her that he has already concluded a treaty of peace with Odin and his followers—dominion in the North henceforth appertaining to the Aser and their chief alone.

So the Temple of Sigtuna is erected, and there the new ruler offers sacrifice to the gods. Yet the Jotar and the Jättar—the race of the powers of evil, ever hostile to the gods and to man, and bitter foes alike of Gylfe and of Odin—arm in numbers for the combat, and there ensues a deadly struggle between their legions and the forces of the new monarch; a struggle terminating in complete victory gained by the Aser, and the succeeding consolidation of their power. The chief incident of the fight is the wound inflicted on Sigurlam, the valiant son of Odin, by Starkotter, one of the victor's most inveterate antagonists. Freya, by her divine influence, removes Sigurlam from the battle-field to the shores of Lake Löggar, heals his wound, and, guiding Heidi to his neighbourhood, inspires him with a consuming passion for King Gylfe's daughter. But Heidi does not as yet return it; her destiny is to be a priestess in the temple of the gods; and it is only at the hour of her consecration that her heart begins to reciprocate the love of Sigurlam. It seems to have awakened too late; she is solemnly devoted to the service of the deities, and her lover departs to Norway, bent, like his father, on farther schemes of conquest. The gods whom she serves compassionate the fate of Heidi, and give her, to lull her sorrows, the gift of supernatural knowledge, so that she becomes a "Vala" or prophetess, the interpreter of the past and the revealer of the future. Here are some of her strains:—

Over land and sea
Is my march sublime,
Like the shaping Spirit
At the birth of time ;
The voice of the gods I obey,
And sing the dawn of creation's Day.

Darkness the boundless,
Senses of mortals
Cannot conceive,—
Eye of Val-father
Lit the abysses ;
High on a fire-cloud
Through the wide regions
Winged he his way ;
Man's earth creating
Out of the giant
Body of Ymer.
Born then was Korè,
Spirit of tempests,
Blowing from north, from
South, and from east.
Egir on ocean
Played with the billows,
Foaming and free.
Throned was the sun, our
World to enlighten ;
Men to existence
Sprang on its breast.
Vainly does Lokè
Writhe in his torments,
Fast-bound in fetters
Forged by the gods.
Vainly his spouse the
Viperous venom
Aye dropping o'er him,
Dreams to detain.
Yet shall the day dawn,
Ragnarök awful,—
Day of all changes,
Day of all doom.
Nathless it brings not
To the Supreme One
Change or destruction ;

He shall survive it,
Star-clad, exalted
High on his throne ;
Nothing can shatter
Val-father's power.

Mortals so feeble !
When ye shall hear the
Giallar-horn sounding,
Calling to battle
Hosts of the Aser,
Then burst the fetters
Wreathed around Lokè,
Fenris-wolf rages,
Hideous and wild ;
Blood runs in rivers,
Dealt are the death-wounds,
Earth in her anguish
Rendeth in twain.
Nathless the broken
Wide-severed fragments,
Once more united,
Fashion a lovely
Blossoming isle !
Found, too, is Balder,
Radiant Asa,
Ruler again.
Night to day changes,
Age becomes youth,—
Reign over all things
Glory and joy.
Thenceforth shall Love be
Monarch of mortals,
Peace shall in brotherhood
Bind men and gods.
Later-born races,
Peopling the new-made
Ages, shall listen
Glad to the voice of
Saga when singing
Praise of the light that
Visited Valhal,—
Spirit creative,
Framer of All !

Only those, doubtless, who are familiar with the Scandinavian mythology can be expected fully to understand the meaning of many of the allusions in the preceding extract ; yet we think that even readers whose acquaintance with old northern literature is but superficial, will perceive that the author has grasped, to a considerable extent, the spirit of the ancient Scalds, and that the measure he employs, with its emphatic ring and frequent expressive alliterations, is well-fitted to embody the Vala's retrospect of the things that have been, and her prediction of those that are yet to come.

Odin frees Heidi from the painful despotism,—for it has now assumed such a form,—of the gift of prophecy she has received, and immediately

afterwards occurs her father's death. Three winters pass away ; Sigurlam at last returns from Norway, and, after a series of minor incidents, to which we cannot more fully allude, he is espoused to Heidi, and they leave Sigtuna for Quenland, where the victorious son of Odin has now established his kingdom. A son is born to Sigurlam, and his days are, for a season, spent in comparative peace. But the old enmity of the Jotar and Jättar, although slumbering, has never been destroyed ; they make a combined assault on Sigurlam, at a favourable opportunity, and when almost overpowered, he is rescued by his son, now rapidly nearing manhood, and emulating his sire's prowess and renown. A second attempt of the Jotar is unfortunately successful, and after performing prodigies of valour, Sigurlam expires on the battle-field. Odin, who at Sigtuna learns the tidings of Sigurlam's death, sails to Quenland, blesses his grandson, and consecrates him to the grateful task of inflicting vengeance on the Jotar for his father's untimely fate. When returning, Odin has a marvellous vision, described in the following verses :

Already the darkness of night is falling ;
 No longer the fir-tree shakes to the tempest,
 The winds themselves seem wrapped in quiet ;
 O'er earth, with noiseless foot, sleep wanders,—
 The flower now lulling, the bird now rocking
 That dreams of its mate amid the branches,—
 Its mate already in Southern groves.
 And Odin himself his head reclineth
 Against a moss-grown pine,—whose roots
 A hundred years in the earth have flourished,—
 And then the Spirits of Light surround him
 With radiant visions, and sing of rest
 And peace pervading the realm of nature ;
 While swift arise on the wings of foresight
 His thoughts to the dome of high-arched heaven.
 Clear he discerns the golden Temple,
 Where Valhal's gods in their splendour dwell ;
 Where sits Val-father, the warriors hailing
 Who, freshly-wounded, approach his throne.
 He hears the gold-harp, struck by Bragi,
 Of glorious battle-fields rings each tone ;
 His hammer Thor, at the sound, is pressing
 Close to his bosom, as 'twere a maiden,
 For whom his heart, like a lover's, throbs.
 And stately Freya, with face as fair
 As gleams the light of the pole-star through
 The blue serene of the midnight skies,
 Her milk-white hand to her spouse outstretches
 And bears to his own the foaming goblet,
 Which, sitting high with the gods, he quaffs.
 A tear of gold on her cheek is falling,
 But vanishes soon amid the roses
 That redden the lily hills below.
 Yet like the sun in his eastern dawning,
 Balder the good mid the Aser sits.

With peaceful glance on the earth he gazes
 And beckons towards the dreaming Odin,
 Whose sleep-sealed eye on the wings of vision
 Aloft is borne through the distant spaces,
 And follows the mild, the loving God !
 At last he discerns a blood-stained altar—
 Death-struck victims are near it piled,
 Yet scarce he marvels at what he sees,
 Ere passes away the gold-roofed Temple,
 And there, on the spot that bore its columns,
 A cross points upwards, and seeks the skies !
 He hears a song in the starry regions,
 By unseen spirits the strain is sung :

“Atonement is made,
 The temple o’erthrowing ;
 The Cross is displayed,
 With peace overflowing !
 An offering of blood
 To satisfy heaven,
 No more shall ye render ;
 The heart it is solely,
 The heart it is wholly
 Ye henceforth shall tender !”

Odin afterwards meets *Heidi*, and endeavours to comfort her in her sorrow for her husband's fate. She sings her “Swan Song,” seeks and finds death in the waters, while Odin's own departure immediately follows. Like a true Scandinavian warrior, he transfixes his breast with the sword that has so often shone in the light of battle,—his soul ascends to Valhalla ; and thus the poem terminates.

Some general idea of the plan and character of *Heidi* may be afforded to the reader by this imperfect sketch : yet there are various points of interest in the work, to which we have found it impossible to refer. For example, we would have liked to dwell on the lyrics interspersed throughout the poem, some of which—such as the heroine's “Swan Song”—seem to us to possess peculiar merit. But we are constrained to pass to the *Vikingasaga*, the second of King Carl's two longer pieces, and, we think, in certain respects superior to the first. It is written in verse of the *Hiawatha* fashion, which runs, on the whole, in graceful and pleasant flow ; while like *Heidi*, it is largely intermingled with lyrics in various styles of verse. We translate the introductory lines :—

Mid the ancient pine-tree forests
 Far in Norland, home of warriors,
 Linger yet old Saga mem'ries
 Treasured from the Asa days.
 Deeds of valour by the poets
 Were embalmed in song that chaunted
 High the praise of heroes dwelling
 In sea-girded Swithiod.
 Everywhere were found in Nature
 Spirits fitted to interpret
 Saga-tales of Sweden's childhood.

For in Lógar Lake the kelpie
 Smote his golden harp at even,
 And the water-spirit's music
 Echo bore across the billows
 To the distant reedy shore.
 Fairies on the emerald pasture,
 Like a troop of misty shadows,
 Stole around the sleeping blossoms.
 In the forests dwelt the Vättar,—
 Airy figures softly cradled
 On the branches of the trees,—

Listened to the voice of song-bird,
 Joyed when summer-winds caressed them,
 Hid themselves when tempest roared.
 But concealed from human vision,
 In the mountain clefts and chasms,
 Lived the dwarfs,—a crafty race !
 Odin's eye they still avoided,
 Hated still the radiant Balder,
 Trembled for the mighty Thor.
 Seldom into light they ventured ;
 First, when swarthy night was robing
 All things in her veil of darkness,
 Stole they from their rocky prison.
 One peculiar gift they boasted,—
 How to forge the stubborn steel.
 Far renowned was dwarfish labour,
 For the weapons which it fashioned
 Smote the very rocks asunder,
 Pierced like serpent-tooth the hauberk,
 Laid the bravest warrior low.
 Thus they forged the wondrous falchion,
 Tírfing called, for aye victorious ;
 But its blade with poison sprinkled
 Now was hidden, and scarce any
 Knew the place of its concealment,
 Where it lay, and wrapt in silence
 Dreamed its ghastly felon-dream !

Orient now, in robes of purple,
 Pioneers the Lord of Light,
 Delling, soon to greet in glory

Earth from deepest sleep awakened.
 Nightly dreams, the elves of even,
 Flee afar to realms unknown ;
 Only on the grass are traces
 Of the tears the Night has shed.
 Every flow'ret's open chalice
 Turns to hail the dawning splendour ;
 And the song-birds in the forest
 Raise a wordless morning-hymn.
 Greenest boughs the trees are stretching
 O'er the mirror of the waters,
 And their stately crests lie pictured
 In the glassy plain below.
 From the new-lit arch of heaven
 Radiance on the waves is falling,
 While the white stems of the birch-trees
 Seem a flock of royal maidens
 Bathing, clad in morning robes.
 And the stream's joy-drunken billow
 Gathers tribute, like a Viking,
 From the beauty of each region
 Which it passes in its course.
 In the distance stretches Ocean,
 Gleaming bright, a giant mirror
 Set in giant granite frame.
 Sotaskár the place is titled,
 Which affords a trusty harbour
 To the Viking's stately sea-steeds,
 When they rest from battle-conflict,
 Or, to 'scape the scathe of tempests,
 Seek a haven for a time.

There is no novelty in the plan of *En Vikingasaga* ; it is simply a well-known Scandinavian legend, the old northern tale of truest affection between man and man, and of love between man and woman stronger far than death. Hjalmar and Oddur first met each other in hostile guise ; but exchanging sentiments of enmity for those of friendship, they eventually plight troth as foster-brothers, and preserve their vow unbroken to the end. King Anè, ruling at Sigtuna, whose chief warrior is Hjalmar, has a fair daughter, Ingeborg, who is sought in marriage by Hjorvard, son of Arngrim, a neighbouring sovereign. Appearing at Anè's court, accompanied by his eleven brothers, he demands the hand of Ingeborg, which demand is met by a counter-claim on the part of Hjalmar. Anè leaves the matter to the maiden's decision, who gives Hjalmar the preference. Fired with rage, Hjorvard challenges his successful rival to single combat on the island of Samsö, the favourite scene of such encounters in the north. The challenge is accepted, and, amid the tears of Ingeborg, due preparations are made for the hostile meeting. Meanwhile, Angantyr, one of Hjorvard's brothers, procures from the dwarfs their fatal sword, Tírfing, the poison-sprinkled blade of which is victorious over every antagonist. On the shore of Samsö the rivals engage in conflict, each accompanied by his friends or relatives ; Oddur kills Hjorvard and his

brethren, with the exception of Angantyr, who, wielding Tírfing, mortally wounds Hjalmar, and is himself slain by that champion at the moment of his fancied triumph. Oddur carries back to Ingeborg the ring which she had given her betrothed previous to his departure on his fatal errand, and she presses it to her lips in a transport of passionate emotion. But the poison of Tírfing, with which it has been saturated, immediately does its deadly work, and Ingeborg gladly goes to rejoin her lover in the world of shades. This, it will be seen, is just the story so common in the ancient Scandinavian annals, and so characteristic of the ancient Scandinavians themselves. It is well treated, however, by our author; and Ingeborg's womanly nature, different from that of Heidi,—every way softer and more amiable,—is portrayed with a tender and skilful hand. We give two extracts, the first being Ingeborg's introduction to the reader :—

Pause, O shining wave of Fyris,
Hasten not to Lögár lake !
Linger by the verdant margin,
By the flow'ret's open blossom
Which its graceful head is bending,
Thirsty, to thy pearly waves !
Pause, enraptured by the beauty
Of the emerald groves around,
Where the breeze of spring is blowing
Through the greenly clust'ring branches.
All in vain !—the pictures, Fyris,
Which have glassed themselves so often
On the surface of thy waters,
Cannot check their rapid journey
To the goal they seek for aye.

But, when'er they see a damsel
Fair as Freya, on their margin,
Breathing forth in silver music
All her spirit's secret sorrows,
Will they still refuse to pause ?—
Pause to witness how the maidens
Of the North may burn with passion
Like the summer-sun aglow,
Yet within their hearts' recesses
Hide it till their dying moment ?
Pause, O wave, extend thy mirror

The next extract is of a totally different character. It describes the fatal combat on the isle of Samsö :—

To their ship the foster-brothers
Hasten by the sounding ocean ;
But a sight of terror met them
As they reached the fatal bay ;
Slain in mad Berserker battle
Were their comrades on the shore.
Hot had been the deadly combat,
For of Hjalmar's valiant champions
Not a single man had yielded
But a foot-length on the plain.

To receive and keep the image
Of the king-born maiden's shape !
Ingeborg the strand is nearing ;
Canst thou not delay thy journey ?
Never rested, happy Fyris,
Image like the royal damsel's
In thy waves' embrace till now !

Likest to a rose fresh-springing,
When it bursts the leafy girdle
Which enclosed its virgin blossom,
And displays its perfect splendour
To its spouse, the summer-sun,—
From the forest's green concealment
Ingeborg now passes forth.
Golden locks unbound are waving
Round her brow of alabaster,—
Fairer is not Freya's forehead,—
And upon her cheek is dawning
Light like that with which Aurora
Faintly flushes eastern skies.
Moving slender as a bulrush,
Hiding milk-white neck and bosom
'Neath her mantle's winding wavelets,
Steps she with the step of Zephyr
Rippling o'er a sea of flowers.

Filled with fiercest wrath was Hjalmar :
All his dark forebodings left him,
And the hero's voice resounded
Over Samsö's barren heath :
" Wildly the wolf-brood
Ravaged the sheep-fold,
Soon as they saw that
Gone were the shepherds
Who should defend it.
Come then, ye wild ones !

Keep not from conflict
 Blood-dripping falchions !
 Sore scream the ravens,
 Waiting the banquet
 I have designed them.
 Gods of Valhalla
 Send the avenger ;
 Lokè will hail you
 Ere eventide ! ”

As he speaks the sons of Arngrim
 Rush to meet him in the combat,
 And eleven fall on Oddur,
 Hjalmar faces Angantyr.
 Loudly Oddur calls to Hjorvard :

“ One by one
 Step ye forth ;
 So it besecms
 The brave to war ! ”

Hjorvard gladly greets his challenge,
 And they interchange their blows,
 Every sinew strained and starting
 In the arms that wield the weapons.
 Lifted swords the air are cleaving,
 And they sound as sounds the storm.
 Brief is Hjorvard's struggle, nathless,—
 Soon he falls on the arena,
 Brother after brother follows,
 Till the soil is soaked with blood.
 Oddur all unscathed beholds them
 Sink to sleep in Death's embraces,
 And to magnify the fallen,
 Chaunts their mournful Drapa thus :

“ Like the lofty
 Lambent north-light,
 Gleams the glory
 Of your valour.
 Now together
 In the vaulted
 Grass-grown barrow,
 Shall ye slumber,—
 Couch fraternal
 Sadly sharing.
 Cloven corselets
 You shall follow,
 That the lustrous
 Lords of Valhal
 Warm may welcome
 Warlike heroes ! ”

When the song is ended, Oddur
 Turns to mark the tide of combat,
 As his foster-brother battles
 With the savage Angantyr.
 Dead reclines the giant Berserk,

Tirfing from his hand has fallen,—
 But from Hjalmar, though victorious,
 Life is ebbing fast away.

Oddur hails his foster-brother :

“ How the strife has ended,
 Hjalmar, I will ask not,
 For of life the roses
 On thy cheek are paling.
 Proud has been thy triumph,—
 Prouder triumph haply,
 Hadst thou borne the tidings
 Home to Fyris' waters,
 Home to Ingeborg ! ”

Hjalmar with a final effort
 To his foster-brother answers :

“ Sixteen gaping
 Wounds already
 Have besmeared with
 Blood the hauberk :
 Tirfing's venom
 Burns my body ;
 Death's red rune-words
 On it written,
 Summon me to
 Valhal's portals.
 Heavy has my
 Fate been ever,—
 Hardest when it
 Tore me from thee,
 Royal maiden !
 Countless conquests
 Have been Hjalmar's ;
 His renown has
 Widely travelled,
 Tracked the eagle
 Over ocean,
 Round the regions
 Rolled in thunder ;
 But the hand of
 Doom must smite us.
 For, however
 Bright and lovely
 Smiles the morning,
 Setteth sunset
 On its splendour,
 And in darkness
 All is buried.
 Life was granted
 By Val-father ;
 Wiles of Lokè
 Ever battle
 With the wisest,
 Highest Odin.

Change is therefore
Ruling all things ;
Only honour,
Valour's glory,
Death-defying,—
Runes immortal,
Grandly graven,—
Deck Time's tablet
Through the ages !

"Foster-brother,
Take the gold-ring

Which she gifted
To her lover.
Faithful was I
To her passion.
Say to Ingeborg,
When the treasure
Thou returnest,
That the final
Word I uttered
Was the maiden's
Dearest name !"

Among the smaller compositions we may indicate *The Mermaid* and *The Three Nights* as especially meritorious. The first is a beautifully-worded adaptation of the usual old legend concerning the fatally destructive fascinations put forth by the fabled woman of the seas ; only, in this case, the victim is rescued at the last moment by the holy memory of a perished earthly love. The moral is, therefore, sound and healthy, as in the case of *The Three Nights*. The latter poem is a kind of poetic commentary on that fragment of Heine's delicious music :

Die Sonne hebt sich noch einmal
Leuchtend vom Boden empor,
Und zeigt mir jene Stelle,
Wo ich das Liebste verlor.

In King Carl's verses the very loss of "Das Liebste" has, in the end, an all-potent spell wherewith to charm the agitated, half-maddened spirit, to restore to it former happiness and the old masculine energy and power.

There are some fine pieces in the later of the two volumes, such as *A Confession of Faith*, which we now translate :—

I in a God believe, who tenderly beholds us,
Who in His loving arms through all the years enfolds us,
A God who has been aye, who is, and who shall be,
When Time's dominion falls, and earth's vain splendours flee.
The sun that smiles serene, arrayed in golden lustre,
The moon that nightly shows her silver face,
The flowers that on the meadow richly cluster,—
All these are bounties of His grace.

I in a Love believe, which from high heaven's palace
In life's primæval dawn came down to earth's low valleys,—
Which round the maiden's locks the myrtle taught to twine,
And in the anguished soul drops peacefulness divine.
O'er throbbing human hearts it ever reigns victorious,
Mid Polar snows, or deserts' arid sand,
And, triumphing, weaves garlands green and glorious
Even beside death's silent land.

And in a Beauty I believe, a Beauty God-descended,
By which all forms of life in harmony are blended ;
From cloud and sea and shore, from heaven and from earth,
Its ever-youthful shape aye gleams and glances forth.

And when it meets the poet's visionary longing,
Thought's mantle it assumes and feeling's voice,
And in the strains that from his harp are thronging,
It bids each listener's soul rejoice.

And I believe that Death the spirit's life can slay not,
The darkness of the grave its course divine will stay no ;
But when the day-gleam breaks on our sepulchral night,
We reach our final goal, the Father's Land of Light.
When sets the sun of earth, when end its strife and sorrow,
Then dawns for us a higher heavenly day,
And in the blaze of God's transcendent morrow
To ransomed souls we wing our way!

Who that has seen it can ever forget that loveliest of the palaces of Sweden, that gem of Lake Mälär's largest and most beautiful island—Drottningholm ; round which cluster so many royal memories—memories of its original founder, John the Third's Catholic spouse, Katharina Jagellon ; of its second founder in its present form, Hedvig Eleonora, widow of Charles the Tenth ; of Adolf Fredrik, Louisa Ulrica, Gustaf III., and Oscar, the father of the present monarch ? It is thus that King Carl bids his "Autumn Adieu to Drottningholm :"

The lovely summer sun farewell is saying
To Scandinavia, and his golden ray,
That late at even on the clouds was playing,
No longer blesses our brief northern day ;
And wood and field that formerly extended
In emerald glory 'neath the heaven's blue,
Have with their verdure autumn-yellow blended,
And in the groves the birds are silent too.

How gratefully my spirit yet reposes
Upon the summer's vanished light and life,—
The time when heaven itself on earth discloses,
And peace transcendent follows winter's strife ;
When all the flowers their fragrant tribute render
To Him who called them into beauty bright,
And, turning to the sun, His emblem, tender
Obedience to the holy laws of light.

But, ah ! how perishing is earthly glory ;
How fast are earthly smiles exchanged for tears !
Such is the nature of our human story .

In its sad progress onwards through the years.
But still in memory serene and sober,
Let mortals store the sunshine of the past,—
Then, o'er the darkest day of dark October,
A light from former summers will be cast.

And so I think, when now farewell I bid thee,
Thou fairest pearl that lies on Mälär strand !
Deep in my spirit have I henceforth hid thee,
Though fate expel me to some distant land :
To thee shall I be drawn when grief is shrouding,
With night-like curtain, all my present hours ;
And through the shadows then around me crowding,
Will gleam the recollection of thy bowers.

Farewell, ye fields and valleys, groves and mountains,
 Where Flora sat in splendour as a queen !
 Where fairies, by the verge of moonlit fountains,
 Danced in a circle on the pasture green !
 Thou reed-crowned shore, whose Spirit of the Water
 His harp was striking in the wavelet blue ;
 Thou wood, whose brook, the hilly torrent's daughter,
 Its thread of silver through the pine-stems drew !
 Farewell, thou starry eve, that threw a shimmer
 So often on the lake in which I rowed,—
 Foiling my *downward* vision with thy glimmer,
 Yet *upward* pointing to the throne of God !
 Have thanks for all the happiness supernal
 Thou didst awake to life within my breast,
 While o'er me bent thy mighty arch eternal,
 The shining symbol of all placid rest !
 Adieu, sweet region ! From my heart I borrow
 The words thus moulded into farewell song ;
 Thy memory shall banish every sorrow,
 And make the winter night less dull and long.
 Mid autumn's clouds thy summer I remember,
 O Drottningholm ! to me for aye the same ;
 Still sunny in the winter-bound December,
 While Peace's lilies cluster round thy name.

We may also quote the simple, but touching, lines addressed to Beckaskog, another favourite country residence of the royal poet:—

Here once more I stand ! At last inhaling
 Free the fragrance of my groves again ;
 And I feel the future now is veiling
 Peaceful hours that still for me remain.
 All I see recalls the period perished,—
 Billows blue, and pathway through the dale ;
 While the flowers, like faithful comrades cherished,
 Friendship old renew, and bid me hail.
 As before, the green hill-side is bending
 O'er the meadow its flower-crested brow ;
 From the wood the beech-tree is extending,
 Glad to welcome me, its verdant bough.
 Peace, where'er I look, my spirit blesses,
 Calmly beats my heart at her command ;
 All, in lovely pictures, me addresses,—
 And *that* speech how well I understand !

But, without referring at greater length to the minor pieces in these volumes,—some of which, such as the brief songs that form a considerable portion of their contents, are well worthy of attentive consideration,—we wish, before we close, to say a single word with reference to what may be styled the political significance of the King of Sweden's poetry. No one who reads his writings can fail to perceive his intense sympathy with everything distinctively Scandinavian, and that his ideal seems to be the resuscitation of the old energetic, nay even warlike spirit of the North, in a new form adapted to the necessities and requirements of the present age. In some of his poems he bitterly bewails the lack of that ancient spirit,

and expresses ardent longings for its revival. Take, as a specimen, the following lines from the stanzas entitled *Fordom* (Former Days) :—

Asa rune-words Still are left us, Rock-engraven, Moss embedded, Like a Saga Scarce believed in By the newer Sons of time. Shall the vigour Of our Northland Ne'er awaken From her caverns Forest-crowned ? Shall the falchion, As in ages That have perished, Never welcome Hostile blade, Never sing its Song of triumph,	Or of death ? To the poet No response Is there given ? Take us rather In thy bosom, Darkest night ! Hero-shadows, Step ye forth From the tombs Where in silence Ye have slumbered ! Tell the present Race of weaklings, How ye battled, Bled and suffered, In defending Land and freedom, In transmitting	Deeds of valour To the ages,— Which immortal As the starry Host of heaven, Shall for ever Gleam resplendent Through the thickest Mists of time ! We may haply Yet awaken From our slumber, Gather round the Ancient banners, Your world-famous Footsteps follow, Battle as is Meet for heroes, Live and labour, Die like men !
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Stronger language still is employed by King Carl in other passages, as, for instance, in the striking lines in which he prays that the—

North may waken
Afresh for battle-morn arrayed,
To carve new runes, all deep and ruddy,
On Time with her ancestral blade,—
That, though the strife be long and bloody,
Her debt to honour may be paid.

Now all this, as we have already hinted, is not without a certain measure of political significance. It is a fact well known to those persons who have attentively considered, during the last few years, the politics of the North of Europe, that at the time of the late Danish-German war, King Carl's sympathies were thoroughly enlisted in behalf of Denmark, and that had he not been compelled, by the restraints imposed on a constitutional sovereign, to yield to other influences, he would most willingly, by force of arms, have aided the Danish people. There can be no doubt that he inherits at least a portion of his illustrious grandsire's military aspirations, and that if a day of deadly peril should dawn for the Scandinavian North, he would welcome it the reverse of reluctantly as the means of awaking the spirit of its ancient valour, and uniting the three Scandinavian peoples in bonds of closer brotherhood to encounter the common foe, from whatever quarter that foe might arrive. As indicating, then, the views and tendencies of the present Swedish ruler, these poems have unquestionably a certain import of their own,—an import not a little interesting at the present period. However, it is with King Carl, not as a politician, but as a poet, that we have now mainly to do ; and so let us conclude by expressing the hope that he may long continue to add to the reputation which, in the latter capacity, he has already gained.

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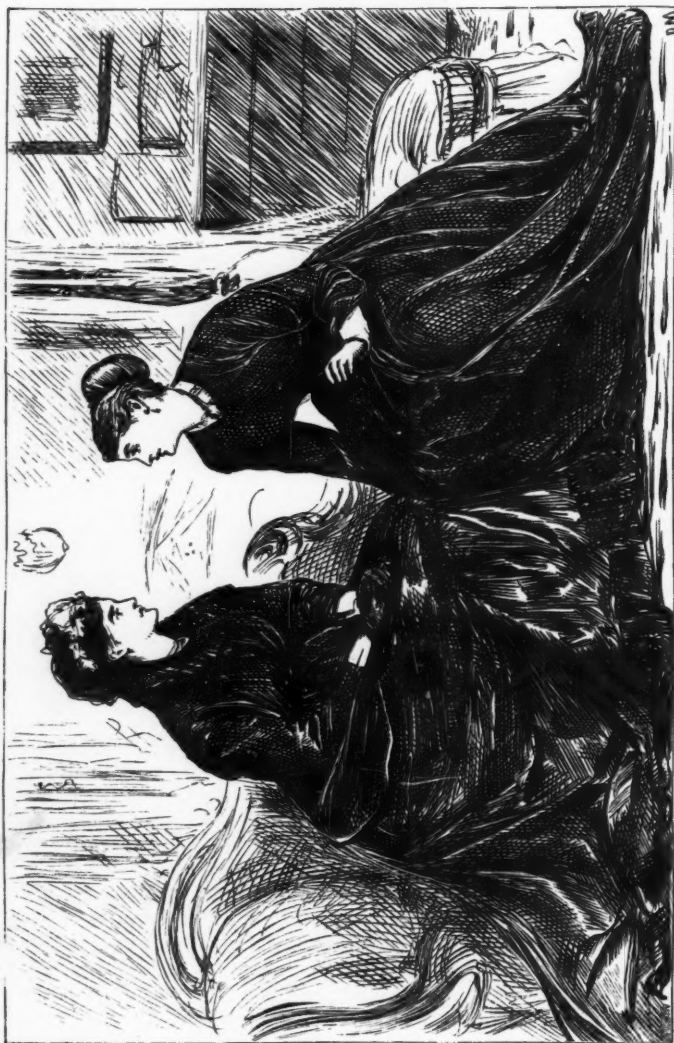
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"OH, HOW VERY KIND YOU ARE, MISS CHILDERSLEIGH."

Against Time.

CHAPTER X.

THE CALUMET GOES ROUND AMONG THE CHILDERSLEIGHS.



HILST he occupied himself with Hemprigge, first in sketching out the design of their Company, afterwards in constructing and elaborating its machinery, Hugh found that each succeeding day it engrossed more of his thoughts. This was the more natural that he knew its success must be the surest panacea for all and any of his troubles, a long step towards the realization of each and all of his dreams. Yet, with his many business pre-occupations, he found leisure to spare for other things, and, indeed, it was an essential part of the scheme that he should

continue to play his part in society. After City hours, and with director-hunting over for the day, he was far from leading the life of a hermit. But all the time there was a something weighing on his mind, and that was the means of replacing himself on a friendly footing at "The Cedars." After the circumstances in which he had last parted from its inmates, the question was one more easy to start than to solve. His latest interviews with Sir Basil, indeed, troubled him but little, and it would have cost him nothing to walk into the establishment in Lombard Street, and beard the old banker in his den with a friendly morning call. But the recollection of the fit of folly that had cast him at Maude's feet in a posture so ridiculous, humiliated him still as keenly as when he left her; when it crossed his mind the bare remembrance made him wince and shudder. The penalty of that passing abdication of reason and *savoir vivre* was a lasting access of morbid *mauvaise honte*. At the very thought of meeting Maude again, his cheeks glowed like a bashful schoolboy's, who thinks he has betrayed to the middle-aged idol of his affections the admiration with which he is overcharged. Each morning he rose in the resolution to drive to Hampstead; each hour of the day brought its engagements, and a decent pretext for deferring the call he longed, yet feared, to make.

How long he might have stood shivering over the plunge it is impossible to say, but a happy chance came to precipitate it. We have spoken before of Captain Childersleigh, Sir Basil's eldest son and heir, who had been down shooting in Scotland at the time of his relation's funeral. Since then the grouse had packed, organized a regular service of pickets, and, now rising in long brown lines, they skimmed the heather half a mile before the muzzles of the breech-loaders. The occupation of the dogs was gone, and, had it not been for the mountain hares the sportsmen were fain to fall back upon, the tail of gillies, the ponies, and the panniers might just as well have been left at home. The chance of taking some lone misanthrope of a grousecock at an advantage was barely enough to repay the toils of the day, and so, for that and other reasons, George Childersleigh, devoted to sport as he was, had torn himself away from it and come up to town.

Hugh had been the object of his admiration ever since the two had been cast together as boys—admiration none the less sincere that it had always been tempered with a touch of awe. Hugh fully returned the liking, but a little of the old patronage that George used to receive as an honour would still, in spite of him, peep out, from time to time, in his manner. Most men would have done the same thing, and Hugh accepted all the deference the other offered him, took him at something below his own very modest self-valuation, and condescended to, and not unfrequently trespassed upon, his unflinching good-humour and easy nature. Having reached Euston Square by the morning express, George did what he had often done before, and drove to the "Albany" to ask for bath and breakfast. As his arrival had been unannounced, his appearance was a surprise to Hugh; but George's face expressed the greater astonishment when he found his host, at that very early hour, already dressed for the day, and seated at the breakfast-table.

"Why, Hugh, this is quite a new idea of yours. You must have a wonderful constitution if you find it none the worse for those late suppers just before going to bed."

"Delighted to see you, George," said Hugh, rising to shake him cordially by the hand, for welcome as the Hussar always was to him, it may be imagined he was never more pleased to see him than now. "If you want to know all about it, sit down and eat, and put off your toilette. I know you'll object to the programme, but it's no great hardship, once in a way, for a man who went through the mutiny, and I've an appointment at 10.30 that won't keep. Sams will find you a chop or something, I dare-say, and meantime you can go to work on the cold salmon."

"Thanks, Hugh; I am not particular, as you know, but if there's one thing repels me more than salmon it's chops: so if you tell Sams to forage for something else, I shall be obliged to you. Had it not been for one and the other I believe I should have stayed another week in Scotland, for although the grouse had packed, there were some woodcocks already lying about in the corries, and I never saw such a year for ptarmigan. But

we rang the changes on mutton and salmon six days in the seven, and now black-faced sheep are become as rare as wolves at Killoden. Nothing to be had but those infernal Cheviots."

"Black-faced or Cheviot, you seem to have thriven on them. You look your work all over, and I could have sworn you came into the room in a rush of Highland air from Strathgrumble."

"It does credit to your imagination then, for I was forced to travel from Carlisle in a carriage hermetically sealed. But pending Sams' arrangements, will you impart the mystery of the nine-o'clock breakfast, and tell me what you have been doing with yourself all this time? I almost feared you must have gone out of town. Since the old lady's funeral Maude hasn't said a word about you in her letters."

Hugh, of a sudden, became exceedingly pressing in his attentions to his guest, while he gained some seconds of hurried reflection, which decided him to take him into his confidence. So plunging in *medias res*, he gave a brief sketch of pretty nearly all that had passed since his return to England, binding George over to secrecy as to the then incomplete arrangements for the Company, and suppressing, it is needless to say, all mention of the little scene in the garden at "The Cedars."

"Well," rejoined George, when he had heard him to the end, "you've done just the sort of thing I should have expected of you, and I wish you all manner of success. To tell the truth, I thought there might be some coolness between you and my people, and then I fought shy of condoling with you about that abominable freak of the old woman's, till I knew how you took it. It was an awful facer, to be sure, and I should have written to tell you that, next to yourself, no one could feel it more than I did, only I thought you ought to take that for granted, and perhaps the least said was soonest mended. So I made up my mind to wait a bit and then run up to town and see you; and, in short, that had perhaps nearly as much to do with my movements as the grouse and the mutton."

"You're an excellent fellow, George," said Hugh, stretching out his hand; "but, as you see, the blow has fallen, and I'm not a bit the worse. On the contrary, I never felt in harder condition,—mind and body."

"So I'm delighted to see; but, after all, I'm not sorry to be here, for I don't suppose you care to quarrel with my father?"

"Very far from it, and depend on it, it will be no fault of mine, if we don't ery quits, and let bygones be bygones."

"All right then; only leave it to me. Maude shall send you an invitation to dinner forthwith, and you'll come back to us on the old footing, just as if nothing had happened. It will be a great relief to my father, that I can answer for. I have no doubt he deeply regrets anything disagreeable he may have said, but I suppose you don't hold to hearing him tell you so?"

As may be supposed, Hugh gladly jumped at a proposal that so entirely tallied with his wishes. George was as good as his word. Next day Mr. Childersleigh received from Maude a friendly if formal note, and

the following evening arriving at "The Cedars" rather late, and finding one or two strangers to break the awkwardness of a family gathering, he got over the long-dreaded interview easily enough. Maude, to outward seeming unruffled, welcomed him as the frank pleasant hostess. Her father, looking and feeling rather ashamed of his late outbreaks, now that his first disappointment had spent itself, strove to atone them by an unwontedly demonstrative cordiality. Yet, with it all, Hugh felt that, permanently impoverished as the banker believed him to be, he scarcely stood on his former footing with his host. Purkiss assisted at the banquet of reconciliation with more than his habitual taciturnity. For the moment the favourite brother had his father's ear, and in the intermittent war waged in the household between the powers of good and evil, Oromasdes was for the time in the ascendant. So he bided his opportunity, with a gleam of cheerful confidence lightening his sullen meditations, as he assured himself that some new folly of Hugh's must sooner or later play into his hands.

Hugh had purposely outstayed his fellow-guests—who had taken early leave, as was the practice on similar occasions of the habitués of "The Cedars." Sir Basil, who had no clue to his intentions or plans, had scrupulously avoided inquiring into them. He had a vague notion that in the future he might possibly give Hugh a helping hand towards something, but in the meantime his dominant idea was to take care that he committed himself unnecessarily to nothing. Hugh surmised and quite appreciated his motives, and determined, as a step towards more easy relations, to give a hint that, read by the light of coming events, might pass for a partial confidence. So, following up some remark, he added in an indifferent tone of voice,—

"And, by the way, I forget if I mentioned it, but I intend domesticating myself in Harley Street."

That morning he had taken George into his confidence as we know, but the faces of the others expressed astonishment in their different degrees—Sir Basil's, perhaps, in the superlative.

"Settle in Harley Street, but how—why——?" Sir Basil stammered, hesitated and stopped; he felt it would be perilous every way to touch on the very delicate subject of Hugh's ways and means.

"You mean to say, papa," said Maude, coming to the rescue, "that you should have thought Mr. Childersleigh's bright rooms in the 'Albany' would be so much more pleasant than that dull old house; and so should I, I must confess."

At the same time, she succeeded but ill in concealing her own interest and curiosity in an announcement which, as she felt instinctively, implied some momentous decision.

"So they are in one way," rejoined Hugh; "but then the more extensive accommodation happens to suit my present circumstances better: so, albeit a good deal against the grain, I have decided on the move." He smiled in his sleeve to see how thoroughly the double meaning conveyed in the allusion to his circumstances mystified his listeners.

"I'm sure we shall all be extremely glad to have you settled among us. I only hope you're acting for the best," proceeded Sir Basil, but once more pulling up sharply, as he caught himself reverting involuntarily to the compromising tone of the guardian.

"I have very little doubt of it, I assure you, Sir Basil, but time will show."

"By the way, then, you will want to get rid of your rooms," broke in George. "As the other house is standing waiting for you, you may as well turn out at once, I suppose, and as good luck will have it, I know a man—Basset of ours—who has just sold out and is looking about for quarters. He is nearly as rich as Monte Christo and quite as impetuous, and if you'll only make way for him, he'll draw you a cheque for anything you like without bargaining. Shall I bring him to you?"

"Many thanks, George, I wish you would. But I can't go at once. Mr. Basset may have them, say, in a couple of months."

"That's no manner of use; Basset's sure to have suited himself long before," responded George, shaking his head, but not attempting to argue the point. He knew well by experience that when Hugh's mind was made up to an apparently foolish thing, it was generally for some reason perfectly satisfactory to himself, and was not to be shaken by others.

Sir Basil's face was eloquent of profound disgust, but he said nothing until Hugh had taken leave. Then he broke out—

"What's bred in the bone, you see. It's the old story. As recklessly imprudent as his father, and nothing will ever cure him. It's some wild crotchet of his, this move into Harley Street; but the keeping on his rooms, and refusing such an offer as he will never have again, is the very madness of prodigality."

"I make little question you will find yourself the sufferer by the arrangement in the long run, sir," interposed Purkiss, pleasantly. "Evidently Hugh has made up his mind to stick by his relations as long as ever they will stick by him."

"I am sure you for one had never any great reason to complain of being over-troubled with him, Purkiss," retorted George; "and I'll answer for it, whatever may happen, he never dreams of taxing your generosity."

"Take care he does not make an experiment on yours, before you see the last of him, George. He'll be a fool if he does not, that I will say for him."

With which parting shot Purkiss retired for the night, following his father, and leaving George alone with his sister.

"Mr. Childersleigh's whole conduct is a mystery to me, I confess, George," she began; "and I don't wonder it puzzles and vexes my father. I don't profess to know what he means by going to live in Harley Street, although, if I am not very much mistaken, you do; and it does seem strange that, when money must be an object, he should refuse to let your friend have his rooms for the sake of staying in them a month or two longer."

"You're a sharp observer, Maude, when it pleases you to set your wits to work on a subject that interests you," answered her brother, laughing and looking at her, till she gave up the attempt to brazen it out, and turned away in some confusion. "Yes, I do know why he goes to Harley Street, although I am bound over to silence, but a day or two more will gratify your curiosity, so take that for your comfort. As for the other, like you, I can but guess."

"But you do guess?"

"Well! knowing nothing whatever but something of the circumstances and something of Hugh, I should say it can by no possibility be any reason personal to himself that makes a sensible man like him act as he is acting. There can be nothing whatever to prevent his leaving the 'Albany,' so the difficulty, if there is one, must be in Harley Street. He happened to tell me he should do nothing to the house or the furniture in the meantime, so there can be no hitch about that. Should you not say it may be the presence of Miss Winter that embarrasses him? He can't well go into the house while she stays in it. He won't turn her out. So he sits down quietly under a heavy loss he can ill afford, and waits perforce till she or some one else helps him out of his difficulty. Wouldn't that be Hugh all over, I ask you, Maude?"

"It's very possible you are right, George," rejoined Maude, meditatively; "and I've a very great mind to drive into Harley Street to-morrow. Indeed it was thoughtless of me not to have gone before; that poor girl must be wretchedly desolate."

"Better late than never, Maude, and I don't think you could possibly do a kinder action. Lucy Winter must be all abroad, and if she is Hugh's difficulty, who can help him out of it as a woman can?"

"I've put matters in train, and some good must surely come of it," was his comfortable reflection as he walked upstairs. "But I should very much like to know why Maude has taken to speaking so properly of 'Mr. Childersleigh' all of a sudden."

CHAPTER XI.

MISS WINTER LOSES A HOME AND FINDS A FRIEND.

LUCY WINTER had, indeed, been desolate enough—desolate in the desolation that is aggravated by uncongenial society. Old Miss Childersleigh had picked her up not only an orphan but a waif, a child whose nearest relations were so far removed that they could scarcely be reasonably expected to come out of their way to look after her. Any promptings of charity or conscience that may have troubled them, were stifled when they came to hear that she had been claimed and retrieved by this wealthy old woman. Half envying the girl her luck, half distrusting the caprices of her protectress, they thought it the safer plan to assume she was

provided for permanently; and, on that understanding, to wash their hands of her in case things should chance to turn out differently. If they had heard of Miss Childersleigh's death, doubtless the same prudence recommended reticence, while they were yet in ignorance of the state of their young relative's fortunes. In any case no messages of condolence or offers of aid had come to Lucy. There she had sat, moping in the solitude of her room, like some wretch isolated in an inundation, who, look where he will, sees nothing but the black, blank, hopeless waste of waters that keeps threatening him on his lonely perch. Long an automaton in a household that revolved by clockwork in its monotonous routine, she had never been trained to think or suffered to act for herself. Now despair was her natural refuge from a state of things that would have tried the strength of a much more self-reliant character, and each feeble attempt she made at conjuring up something like a prospect, ended generally in a hearty fit of crying; while, as her courage ebbed with her spirits, these fits became more frequent and more violent.

Life had never been very bright to her, and they were dreams rather than realities she had to regret. She felt in her wretchedness that if she could only dissolve away in her own tears, and vanish out of existence in a painless death, it would be far the pleasantest way out of her troubles. But then a despatch like that evidently demanded unlimited and undisturbed licence of grief, and the energetic Mrs. Parkyns had a genius for rousing people a bit, as she was pleased to express it. She was continually sweeping into the room in a borrasca of bombazine; and in their diabolical although unintentional ingenuity, her briefest sentences acted as spells to set all the finer sensibilities on edge. Her nature was a kind-hearted one at bottom; for the first day or so she had been passably tolerant, and she might have remained so had she ever been in the way of giving herself time to think. But she had never been gifted with overmuch patience; and compelled to assume with Miss Childersleigh a virtue that was none of hers, she very naturally hastened to indemnify herself for the fretting penance now that circumstances had made her her own mistress again. Lucy's tears fell like oil on the flame of her temper, and she blazed up before she knew she was getting angry. Her old jealousy of the girl would revive, fed by the obvious shrinking from her fiery companionship. Excesses of language were regularly followed by fits of remorse that sent her back repentant, only to explode again and repeat the offences she regretted.

"I know I'm hot, Miss Lucy, and I'm sorry I said what I did; but then it's enough to try the temper of a cherubim to see you sobbing and crying, and never heeding a bit what I say. Lord bless me! now there you are at it again; and what for, I can't for the very life of me imagine. I've no patience with people that set up for finer feelings than other people. I should be ashamed, if I were you, to be always crying because she didn't leave you better off, and so I tell you; and there you are like a lady with your 70*l.* a year, while I, who have toiled and moiled all these

years—I'll just give you a bit of my mind while I'm about it, Miss Lucy. And there I go again, but to be sure you're enough to provoke the very angels." And Parkyns, in a violent effort upon herself, would force down on her sides the arms she had stuck akimbo, screw up her lips upon the rush of her eloquence, and tear herself half-choking out of the room.

But if Parkyns was little of a comfort to Lucy, she shrunk still more from Hooker. This was the more ungrateful and unaccountable, that the whole manner of that demure domestic had softened into a demonstrative tenderness, and become redolent of an ostentatious consideration for her. It was unreasoning, doubtless; but in a state of mind like hers, reason abdicates its seat, while fanciful sorrows fall as heavily as real ones, and thus her growing dread of encounters with the butler made her life one perpetual shudder. But there is a providence that tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, and she had at least the comfort of having in the bedroom, that was patent to Parkyns, a sanctuary sacred from Hooker. At first she made her descents from it in fear and trembling to the dining-room to partake her solitary meals, where the viands were poisoned by the presence of her bugbear, who, in his versatile conversation, stooped his intelligence to hers, and waited upon her with affectionate patronage. At last the nervous horror with which she looked forward to these formidable occasions had sent her to bed with symptoms not at all unlike the heralds of a grave illness. However, a night's repose, with the prospect of a day's relief, comparatively restored her; and next morning she was roused and swept out of bed under the threat of a visitation from Dr. Pillington. She would willingly have asked leave to breakfast with Parkyns, but that lady and Lucy's *bête noire* took their meals together. So, pale and nervous, she waited till she knew her own had long been laid, and believing her enemy must be wearied of waiting for her, slunk down on tiptoe that she might snatch a morsel in comparative comfort.

So noiselessly, indeed, did she glide downstairs that she was absolutely unheard by Hooker, who, with his hands under his coat-tails—the picture of a well-fed citizen who lives at home at ease—was contemplatively looking over the window-blinds at such paralysed life as stagnates in Harley Street. At the sight and the disappointment the poor girl started, and the tears that were always brimming up ran fairly over. She made a stealthy movement as if to slip back again unperceived, then stopped hesitatingly, resting her hand on the table. It shook so violently that the rattling of the china made Hooker turn. In a moment he was by her side, looking with profound solicitude in her face, overwhelming her with tender inquiries after her health, officiously bustling over her breakfast arrangements, and volunteering a variety of obtrusive little offices.

"Ah, Miss Lucy!" he began, with a sentimental air that sat but awkwardly on him, "it goes to my very heart to be sure to see you mope like this. I've watched you, you know, ever since the day they brought you here, till I've come to look on you—if you'll let me say it—quite as a

child of my own. You would hardly believe now how I've felt for you sometimes when she would be down upon you."

"Miss Childersleigh was always very good to me, Hooker," answered Lucy. Her voice trembled in agitation and a little anger as well, and, on the whole, she rather welcomed an observation she was constrained to resent.

"Far be it from me to speak in anything but the highest terms of the departed one, Miss Lucy, or of a mistress I always loved and esteemed. Nothing could be so far from my thoughts. I should scorn myself for the action were I only capable of it," insisted Hooker, with injured and impressive solemnity.

"I am quite sure of it, Hooker," Lucy hastened to explain; a little frightened after her fluttering display of temerity, and disposed to be conciliatory.

"I was certain you could not misunderstand me, Miss Lucy: we have known each other much too long for that, I hope. But I only wish I could persuade you of the real interest I take in you. Ah! I'm an old man now, but I might be of some use to you yet if you would only look upon me as your well-wisher."

In his honest warmth he took in his own the little hand that was crumbling away at the cold toast in default of resolution to go out in search of the butter. Lucy jerked it back instinctively before the pulpy fingers had well closed on it; but apparently neither offended nor disconcerted by the candid vivacity of the action, he proceeded,—

"Pardon my speaking out, Miss Lucy, but the plain truth is that you are left here quite alone, with no one in the world to advise you"—the tears that had been trembling in the eyelids began to fall fast—"and not a soul to tell you what is the best thing to do. It isn't to be expected you should know yourself, and if I make so bold as to speak to you, it's because I'm quite sure you don't want to be in any one's way, and because, as I happen to be aware, you are putting out other people who have plans of their own."

Hooker waited and Lucy sobbed.

"You can't stay on here, as you must see yourself," he proceeded slowly, dropping the words deliberately into her ears one by one. "The house is Mr. Childersleigh's now, and he means to use it; but if he did not, a house of Mr. Childersleigh's is not the place where I should like to see any young lady I cared about. People will talk, you know."

As it chanced, at that moment Lucy had in her pocket a note from Mr. Childersleigh himself, in which, assuring her he had no present intention of occupying the house, and that he intended Mrs. Parkyns to remain in it in the meantime as his housekeeper, he begged her to use it just as long as she pleased. Moreover, he reminded her of his promise to be of service to her, and repeated the assurance that few things would make him more happy than her showing him how to redeem it.

Lucy said nothing of all this to Hooker, but it flashed upon her that he might be only speaking the truth in telling her she was an obstacle in

Mr. Childersleigh's way, and as she grew more despondent about herself, she felt she ought perhaps to be grateful to her tormentor.

"So, Miss Lucy, as I may mention to you in confidence, my opinion of Mr. Childersleigh is such that I have come to the conclusion I should be by no means justified in staying on with him myself."

"How dare you abuse Mr. Childersleigh behind his back?" Lucy broke in, almost fiercely, turning like an aggravated fawn on an old grey hyæna. "How dare you say such things of him, when you know him as well as I do to be kindness itself?"

"Kind enough, and sometimes perhaps rather too kind," retorted Hooker, biting his lips. "But I should be the last person to abuse Mr. Childersleigh and the first to defend him, and if I speak out now, you may be sure it is not because I like doing it. Perhaps you might agree with me if I could venture to tell you more; after all, he's no worse, I daresay, than a great many other gentlemen, and a good deal better than some."

"Thank you, but I won't hear you tell me anything more—not one word." And Lucy fluttered up from perhaps the most miserable meal she had ever sat down to.

"Only one moment, Miss, please," said Hooker, talking fast and precipitating himself desperately into a proposal he had meant to lead up to gently. For he had come beforehand to the conclusion that if not made at once, circumstances might occur to prevent its being made at all. "One moment, I beg. I don't really know why we should go on talking of Mr. Childersleigh: for, once out of his sight, be quite sure he'd never spare a thought either to you or me. What I began by saying was that you must leave this house sooner or later, and that my humble opinion was the sooner the better. Now I don't know if you've any idea of where you are to go, or what you mean to do?"

He waited for the answer, which he knew as well as she did would never come.

"And if you have no plans, whatever is to become of a young lady born and brought up like you? Perhaps you may have no money either, and depend on it nothing of that little annuity of yours will come to you for heaven knows how long——"

At this allusion to her literally penniless condition, Lucy, with an impatient toss of her head, shied from the coarse hand that touched her so roughly, and made another movement towards the door.

"Well, Miss Lucy, but you must look all that in the face. I'm an old man, and I see before you the troubles you can know nothing of. If I speak at all, it's only because I would wish to see you spared them. All I can do for you, I offer to do; I put my very best at your disposal, and I can do no more. I've put by a snug bit of money in my day, and I've got, I'm glad to say, as comfortable a cottage down Camberwell way as you'd wish to see. My sister lives there now; she's always been used to the very best of society, been for years own lady to her Grace the Duchess

of Connaught; and, in short, it would be both a pride and a pleasure to me, Miss Lucy, if you'd consent to move out there at once and take time to look quietly about you. The longer you choose to stay with us, the more welcome we'll make you."

This most unexpected and hospitable proposal increased Lucy's pitiable embarrassment a hundredfold. Her dislike of Hooker had steadily deepened in her talk with him, and now, just as it had grown to loathing, he heaped coals of fire upon her head. Helpless as her condition was, she felt at once that his invitation did not admit of a moment's reflection, that to accept it was an absolute impossibility. Yet her remorse at being unable to feel even the commonest gratitude made it seem the more terrible to hurt him by rejecting kindness so disinterested. She grew redder and redder, hotter and hotter, as she rapidly rehearsed forms of refusal, till at last her words bolted forth in as awkward a shape as they could well have taken, and in sheer desperation she blurted out, as she rushed past him,—

"Oh, no, thank you, Hooker. You're very kind indeed, I'm sure; very kind; but I can't—no, I couldn't—oh, not for the whole world."

If Hooker did look rather annoyed as his eyes followed her in her retreat, can we wonder at it? There could hardly have been a more ungracious refusal of a generous and disinterested offer.

Lucy fled up to her room and locked herself in. Where all Parkyns' vigorous remonstrances had failed, Hooker's plain speaking had succeeded. She did rouse herself, and now that a decision seemed forced on her, she tried hard to think seriously. They are never very easy, first attempts of the kind. The limp mind, utterly unaccustomed to discipline, will go straggling away from its point, indulging itself in the old purposeless lamentations. She had not got much farther than the assuring herself for the thousandth time that she was the most unhappy of girls, and that she would give all she had or hoped, for a friend she could confide in or consult, when she was startled by a thundering double-knock at the door below. It woke the slumbering echoes all over the silent house, and they kept mouthing the sounds backwards and forwards among them as if once disturbed they would never go to sleep again. Even in the depths of her trouble, perhaps in some vague hope of a way out of it, Lucy's curiosity was excited by the unaccustomed arrival.

She looked over her blind and caught a glimpse of the roof of a brougham and the crown of a coachman's hat. She trembled all over; could it be this terrible Mr. Childersleigh, the friendly Hooker had spoken so darkly of, come on a visit to his house, and if so, whatever was she to say to him? Then she heard the butler's well-known foot-fall mounting the stairs, and a moment after, the tap of his well-padded knuckles on her door. She went to open it, shuddering at the glimpse of the swollen eyes, washed-out cheeks, and red-tipped nose she caught in the glass.

"It's Miss Childersleigh, Miss Lucy; Miss Maude from Hampstead:

she asked to see you, but I told her how very unwell you had been, and said I rather feared you might not be able to come down to her. So if I was you, I wouldn't exert yourself to do it; there's not the slightest occasion."

"Oh, thank you, Hooker," exclaimed Lucy, for once unfeignedly thankful; "if you're sure she wouldn't be annoyed, tell her that I really am ill; that I have a very bad headache indeed. But be sure you say how much obliged I am to her."

"Oh, yes, Miss Lucy, you may quite depend upon me. I'll make it all right, you trust me." And Hooker withdrew well pleased to announce to Miss Childersleigh, that Miss Winter was lying down in her room with a severe headache; that she was utterly unequal to seeing any one, but sent Miss Childersleigh her very grateful duty.

"Poor child!" said Miss Childersleigh, "her head must be bad indeed—wandering, I should think, if that was her message. So she sent me her grateful duty?" and she laid a marked emphasis on the last words.

"Well, Miss Maude," hesitated Mr. Hooker, rather taken aback, "she said that or something like that."

"Thank you. But, you see, as you have evidently forgotten her words, it is just possible you may have mistaken her meaning. I think I'll go upstairs."

"But I do assure you, Miss,—you've no idea how very bad she is."

"You heard me say I should go up, did you not? Will you show me her room, or must I find it for myself?" And Hooker, fain to obey, ushered the way accordingly, voluble in apologies.

Miss Childersleigh's voice had changed a good deal when she softly appealed to Lucy to open, and when the two girls stood face to face the real concern she showed was the best apology for her importunity.

"I won't make apologies for taking your room by storm in this way, my dear Miss Winter," she began; "if I did, I should have to go back and ask pardon for not having come in search of you long before, and for that I frankly confess I have not a word to say; I can only throw myself on your mercy."

On the rare occasions when Lucy had seen her visitor before, they had barely exchanged a dozen of words. She had been in the habit of wondering at her from a distance, oppressed by her magnificent toilettes, and still more by the imperturbable self-possession she opposed to the *brusqueries* of the late Miss Childersleigh. Now she scarcely recognized her in the quiet dress and quieter manner. There was something too in Maude's face that assured her of sympathy, and after the uncongenial company she had been thrown with of late, sympathy was what she languished for. So she did perhaps the best thing she could have done in the circumstances, and broke down in one of those bursts of tears of hers.

Maude was touched, and the mute appeal was flattering to her stronger

nature. She reproached herself with her dilatoriness as being greatly to blame for Lucy's misery, and inwardly resolved to atone for it, and, for the moment at any rate, take the other under her wing. Gushing girls and feminine sentiment she detested: consequently she was by no means rich in female friends, yet somehow next moment her arm was round Lucy, and she was whispering in her ear words that meant little in themselves, but which were perhaps none the less comforting on that account. Ere long, Lucy was unfolding to the unwonted sensation of having some one warm to her, and had become talkative and almost cheerful over her griefs. Only as she brought her history down to the incidents of the hour before, and the painful colloquy with Hooker, her face clouded again; she had nearly forgotten her present dilemma in the very excitement of explaining things to her new friend.

"So I must make up my mind what I am to do with myself. I knew, of course, that I couldn't stay on here, but I kept putting off thinking about it. Mr. Childersleigh has been very good; how good I scarcely knew till Hooker told me, but his kindness is only a reason the more for removing myself out of his way."

"Yes, I think with you, dear; it will be better on all accounts that you don't stay on here, and much pleasanter for yourself. No wonder you look ill; what astonishes me is that you have not moped and worried yourself to death days ago. 'The Cedars' are not very gay, it's true, but I think I can answer for it, you'll find our house more lively than this one; at all events we'll all try our best to make you like it. So you'll come to me for a long visit, won't you? and then we shall have time to talk things quietly over."

"Oh, how very kind you are, Miss Childersleigh," gasped Lucy, her face becoming instantaneously radiant; "but I couldn't think——"

"Call me Maude, to begin with, Lucy, do please; we're relations, you know, although neither of us seem to have remembered it, and I intend we shall be friends too. You must forgive if you can't forget the shameful way we've all left you to yourself through this dismal time. It was only thoughtlessness, believe me. Come you must, and you really can't help yourself, for it's your only excuse for refusing Mr. Hooker. Why he ever asked you I can't conceive, but I suppose we must take it for granted he meant well: I shall try to set him down in future as one of those unlucky individuals whose manner is against them, but who are far better than they seem. But I see the very mention of his invitation has decided you to accept mine, so you may as well pack up forthwith, and save me the trouble of coming back for you. We'll have Mrs. Parkyns up at once and one of the maids."

In a marvellously short space of time, Lucy was exchanging really regretful farewells with Parkyns, and, reassured by the presence of Maude, had shaken hands with Hooker, with many thanks for his invitation, and a profusion of apologies for declining it. Hooker appeared hurt, and a good deal put out as well, but all that did not prevent his pressing on Miss

Winter a variety of paternal attentions. In person he saw her boxes charged on a hack cab, viciously twisting the ear of the buttons as he lifted him inside it, and solemnly committed them to his charge. Then he closed the brougham door upon the two young ladies with a stately curtsy, and in his valedictory speech took the liberty of wishing Miss Lucy well, and of beseeching Miss Maude to permit him, as an old servant of her family, to come and pay her his humble duty at "The Cedars."

CHAPTER XII.

THE GENERAL MEETING.

THAT was the golden age, when, like Pallas Athene, or like Cytheræa rising from the foam, Companies sprang into being in the full pride of their wisdom and beauty, with intuitive experience and a profusion of witching smiles at the service of all comers. It took little then but a Board and a prospectus, some mahogany and a good deal of plate-glass, to make an institution, and the *Crédit Foncier* and *Mobilier* of Turkey had all these and much more to boot. It was none of your temporary booths shot up fungus-like in the heart of the City Vanity Fair: booths run up of materials picked up anywhere and draped in gaudy calico and tinsel to hide their rottenness from the public. In the pride of its characteristic oriental architecture, the *Crédit Foncier* reared itself like Abdu-y-rahman's famous mosque, upon massy columns contributed from every clime—Ottoman porphyry, Hellenic marble, Scottish granite, freestone, sandstone, and Kentish rag. The City pillars, most critically scrutinized by competent judges, as being quarried nearest home, were solid enough, as all the City knew. Their bases were seated the deeper, that years and former panics had heaped around them the wrecks of many a fallen house. Now the business was full six months old too, and in those days businesses were not only born into their prime, but they lived fast. The *Crédit Foncier* and *Mobilier* of Turkey had come to be looked on as rather a venerable institution, and its Governor, Mr. Childersleigh, was respected as an old City man.

Long ere now it had moved out of its temporary offices into a palace in Lothbury, whose vast portals and Broddingnagian windows would have dwarfed to pigmies a race of giant customers. The mansion had been reared regardless of all cost by a speculative building company, on a site bartered for a carpeting of bank-notes. Its founders had given their architect *carte blanche*, merely stipulating that a fabulous number of Peterhead granite columns should be introduced somehow or other along the Italian façade. The upper row of these were diverted from their more natural purposes, and consecrated to the support of a heterogeneous colony of statues, among which, however, Childersleigh's more fastidious taste had insisted on putting some sort of order. Towering high above the rest, her

features wreathed in benignant smiles, a colossal figure of Plenty was emptying out a cornucopiaful of the choicest gifts and blessings on the floods of lucky clients that passed surging out and in below.

Scoffers said the embodied allegory was pregnant with warning, had the crowd had but the wit and grace to profit by it:—that the presiding deities of joint-stock schemes generally did empty their baskets in premature premiums and a couple or so of excessive dividends, so that not only was there nothing left to come in the future, but they were actually driven to keep calling on their unlucky protégés to replenish their waste.

But few were prejudiced enough to deny that the *Crédit Foncier* and *Mobilier* of Turkey was an exception, or sufficiently rash enough to aver that its most conspicuous emblem was inappropriate. Its managing men had gone to work from the first to help themselves, and had done all that skill and energy could do to make things safe for their shareholders. Short as its career had been, already it had established a marvellous connection, and yet they laboured on at extending it, as anxiously as if all were still to do. The Company found the advantage of being directed by gentlemen, for Hemprigge's shrewdness landed him where Childersleigh had started from. They took it for a maxim that civility was in no case thrown away, and even applicants who came to them on bootless errands often felt more pleasantly towards the courteous managers in Lothbury than to the underbred *nouveaux riches* at the head of rival establishments, with whom they had been more successful—men who had the knack of offending all comers as they swaggered out their little hour on the piles of money-bags they had filched from a credulous public.

"Punctual as usual, Mr. Childersleigh," exclaimed Hemprigge, as one morning his hansom happened to pull up before the steps in Lothbury, just as Mr. Childersleigh appeared round the corner from Moorgate Street. Mr. Childersleigh had taken up his abode in the house he had succeeded to provisionally, and patronized methodically one particular morning train on the Metropolitan Railway. Hemprigge had long ago ceased to make wry faces at the extreme regularity of his principal's attendance. He was not a man to waste his time crying over what he could do nothing to prevent; perhaps he consoled himself with the reflections that if Hugh was less of a puppet than he had intended him to be, he was more of a prop; that the business was all the sounder, and that if he himself had less control than he liked, he had less labour and anxiety too.

"Always punctual. I do not believe there is a man in the City, filling a position like yours, who works himself half so hard."

"So you tell me often, Hemprigge; and I've often reminded you that our position wouldn't be what it is if both of us did not keep our shoulders close to the wheel. Besides, few men work with such a spur as I; as you very well know."

"True enough, Mr. Childersleigh; and now that you've covered so much of the course, what do you say to my prophecies of your beating time, and landing yourself a winner?"

"That I don't mean to throw away a chance by over-confidence. Be sure of that."

"But to look back on the ground we've gone over from the morning of our general meeting—things promise well, don't they? Confess it now?"

Hemprigge looked at him more earnestly than the matter-of-course air with which he put the question would have seemed to warrant, as if anxious to justify or contradict, by hearing Childersleigh's impressions, some internal misgivings of his own.

"It's much too early for anything more substantial than hope; but this I can say, that I can't recall anything to regret; that I don't see where we could possibly have done much better; that, instead of buying our experience dear, we've been paid pretty handsomely for acquiring it; and, finally, let me add, if we have kept on straight and steady, it has been in very great measure owing to you."

Hemprigge smiled, but, as it seemed, with an effort, and you would have almost said he appeared to find the compliment an unpalatable one. Yet it was evident enough it was paid in all sincerity, and it came from a man who rarely dealt in such things, and who had it in his power to follow up flattering words with deeds.

"You really have no reason whatever to thank me, although, next to yourself, I am more interested in your success than any one can be. But, as you are aware, all my own hopes and interests are bound up with those of the Company."

"Of course I know all that, although I must confess, in my selfishness, I sometimes forget that any of you all has a concern in it but myself. But if in helping your own interests you advance mine, you must let me be grateful all the same."

"If that's your idea, I'm sure I have no objection. Quite the reverse. But I must repeat, once for all, if we are to bandy compliments, that if Miss Childersleigh's money had unluckily dropped straight into your mouth, there would have been a magnificent financier spoiled, and all the world would have known of Mr. Childersleigh would have been his happy talents for spending. Here you are, a City man barely six months old, about to fill the chair at a great meeting of City men, and not only unprimed and unprompted, but knowing, I dare to say, far more of your subject than any man who listens to you. The meeting must go off pleasantly, that's a thing of course, and, upon my word, it's almost a pity. If any one were to tackle you, how you would drag him after you out of his depth, and then get him down and drown him in deep water."

"I devoutly hope I may never have the chance," rejoined Childersleigh, laughing. "But really the water's so clear and so shallow that the most shortsighted of the shareholders may see to the bottom."

"Yes, that's the best of our management. It has been so beautifully straightforward it throws people out, and things are so plain that they puzzle the knowing ones. We really have the purest of consciences, and nothing whatever to conceal; the more they pump the Board, the

higher they send the shares. Very few companies in our position can say as much; and now I can afford candidly to make the admission that you were absolutely right when you insisted on your own way in all that sort of thing."

"The day may come," the astute Mr. Hemprigge reflected, "when he'll be forced to be less strait-laced; and then it may be wealth untold to us to be able to tell the public anything we please, on the strength of our reputation for candour."

"The policy has answered well," Hugh rejoined. "The list of shareholders was a good one to begin with, and it has weeded itself day by day, till now I venture to think no kindred establishment can show a stronger."

"Quite true; and, as I observe, some very shy birds indeed are beginning to come after us—dropping down on the shares, and picking up a few stray ones now and again, before going in for a surfeit."

"So I see. For my part, I wonder they don't get scared away by the premium?"

"It makes them shilly-shally a little, perhaps, but it tempts them too. By the way, do you know who our latest acquisition is?—a very great friend of your own."

"A friend of mine; that doesn't help me much towards guessing. All my old friends are joining us one after another; those of them who have any money left, at least. Besides, I've really no time to spare for riddles on a busy day like this."

"Purkiss Childersleigh, then. He actually committed himself to ten of our shares the other day."

"Nonsense, Hemprigge; you can't mean that? Why, Sir Basil would cut him off with a shilling, and ostracize him from Lombard Street for life if he only knew it. He hates us and all our works like poison. I never knew him miss a chance of having a quiet fling at us."

"He never does; and yet, if Purkiss has bought, you may be quite sure his father's in the secret. Sir Basil's prejudices are pretty strong, but not so strong as to stand in the way of his interests, and he may begin to think it will be a question of interest with him one day or other. Our account is not a bad one now, and it will be much better worth the having later. At any rate, it's a fact that Mr. Purkiss has done us the honour of becoming our associate, and Mr. Purkiss has the credit of knowing as well as most men on which side his bread is buttered."

"It's a good sign, Hemprigge, I grant you, a very good sign, if we wanted more encouragement, and in any case it would delight me to make Sir Basil recant. But I must be gone to look over the letters. Au revoir till one o'clock."

As may be supposed, Purkiss had arrived at his resolution through much mental tribulation. He had seen Company after Company founded and floated to a premium without ever dreaming of embarking in them. Instinct and education, rather than reason, had given him a profound distrust

of all new-fangled schemes, of joint-stock enterprise, limited liability, and over-speculative investments in general. When the Turkish Credit Company issued its prospectus, and threw open its doors, he had at first kindly contributed his very utmost to advertise it, by posting its Governor everywhere as a scapegrace, proclaiming and magnifying his poverty, and decrying his antecedents. For all that, however, when it came to Sir Basil's ears, he had been sternly rebuked, and Sir Basil, as senior partner, if not as parent, was not a man to be trifled with. As we know, Sir Basil, although he sneered at the Company himself, held the family name in too deep reverence to endure to see it needlessly splashed, even though he was apprehensive that Hugh might be dragging it through the mire. Hugh had aggravated his former offences rather than condoned them by this perverse way of seeking his living, yet, as he had made up his mind to adopt it, for every reason the banker desired he should have fair play.

So Purkiss, forced to close his mouth, had opened his eyes and ears, hoping against his convictions—for he was constrained to own the Board a good one—that the scheme might be stifled in its birth, and anxiously watching for any evil signs that might reassure him. On the contrary, he saw it thrive and go on thriving, and flourish beyond his most gloomy anticipations. Its shares mounted steadily to eighty per cent. of a premium; still, if the wealth that was rolling in had flowed out into unknown reservoirs, Purkiss could have resigned himself and borne it. But he realized its full success in watching the growing prosperity of a man he envied and disliked, and his moments of extremest depression were haunted by the radiant phantom of Hugh, doubly enriched by his dip in the City Pactolus, and by the golden flood of Miss Childersleigh's hoarded wealth.

He was troubled with the feeling that he should never rid himself of his remorse, were the Company to turn out a triumph, were he to miss the chance of lightening the blow of seeing Hugh a millionaire by having insisted upon sharing in his winnings and drawing something handsome for himself from the same source. He was full late as he was, that was the worst of it. The original shareholders were swinging fairly away on the free tide of their prosperity, and buying so much later, he should at best be floundering in their backwater. But better late than never, and before all it was essential to obtain his father's assent as a preliminary to this disposal of his economies. Accordingly, he took advantage of an opportunity when left *tête-à-tête* with the old gentleman after dinner. Sir Basil had wheeled his chair round towards the blaze, and drawn the decanter of port over to his elbow.

"Nothing new to-day, Purkiss, I think?"

"Nothing I know of, sir. The shares of that precious Company of Hugh's are up another pound I see, but then they're always going up, worse luck. It's the first half year, and already they talk of a ten per cent. dividend—a bonus."

"A ten per cent dividend and a bonus! I tell you what it is,

Purkiss, it's perfectly disgraceful the unprincipled competition the old houses have to struggle with in these terrible times."

"It's a shocking state of things, sir, there's no doubt of it."

"But it must end in a blow-up sooner or later, there can be no doubt of that, and, for my part, I say the sooner it comes the better. What right have they to go shaking confidence and laying mines to be sprung upon us?"

"Heaven send them a smash, and a speedy one," devoutly responded Purkiss in a genuine burst of feeling. Then, recollecting what was his cue for the moment, he checked himself and resumed:

"Yes, there can be no doubt the ruck must go, but I must say it looks to me very much indeed as if a few of the pick of them may stand."

"Nonsense, Purkiss," retorted his father, peevishly; "I'm an older man than you, and I've seen a good deal of this sort of thing before. Only give them rope enough, and the fools who guide them are sure to hang themselves in time, take my word for it."

"To be sure, sir, no one ought to know better than you. There's no sounder head than yours in the City, I am glad to think, or Childersleigh would not have been what you have made it. But forgive me if I can't quite agree with you here. Of course in the very first panic most of these new houses must go down by the run, but there's no denying that confounded *Crédit Foncier* and *Mobilier* of Turkey looks very like lasting. Richborough himself was saying so yesterday. I do believe that fellow Hugh has some of your own business talent, sir, confound him."

"I shouldn't wonder. I must say it looks rather like it," assented Sir Basil, complacently.

"I fear it does look like it. At all events, if his Company should go on as it has begun, the time might come when he would be able to do us a good turn."

Sir Basil stared at his son, shocked and electrified by the profane suggestion.

"Childersleigh's helped by an infernal Turkish house of yesterday—a house run up in the last few weeks—directed by a dissipated boy!"

"They are strange times, as you said just now, and upon my word—for we must look to Childersleigh's before everything else—upon my word, I must repeat again, it would scarcely surprise me."

The upshot of a long conversation, which utterly spoiled the flavour of Sir Basil's port, was his declining to compromise himself by anything more definite than a general prediction of an evil end to the *Crédit Foncier* of Turkey in particular, kindred establishments in general, and the country that fostered and petted them. At the same time, his son and junior partner was given to understand that he had *carte blanche* to exercise his own discretion as to any little investments he might contemplate, and that he might play his own cards as he pleased. So, after many internal

qualms, Purkiss concluded, as the Americans say, to eat humble pie, and tremblingly approached his fingers to the flames of speculation.

Sir Basil would have seen still greater cause to deplore the growing corruption of the age, had he assisted at the general meeting of the objectionable Company, presided over by his kinsman. The great hall in the palace in Lothbury, designed with a special view to gatherings of the sort, was crowded with rank, wealth, and respectability, all hurrying emulously along the road to fortune. On a raised dais at one end, aloft in awful state, sat the Governor, relatively nearly as much of a stripling as Philip's godlike son, apparently like him in a very fair way soon to sigh for a new commercial world to conquer. His crimson chair was elevated above those of his astute peers : that in which lolled the Deputy-Governor, Lord Rushbrook, being a compromise between the dignity of the one and the other. At a corner of the long table, which fenced them off from their assembled constituents, sat the Managing Director, flashing his keen black eyes round the faces in the hall, and passing a cataract of papers and memoranda through his lissome fingers.

There was Houssein Pacha, the purple fez and the golden tassel ; Sir Ralph Palliser with his dignified grey head and high-set, somewhat supercilious features ; Schwartzschild's thick-bridged swarthy nose, and Mavromichalis' delicately-cut olive one ; there was Rolfganger with his brown beard and blue eyes, and Budger with his stubby grizzled bristles ; Delacour with his lisp and simper and lavender gloves ; McAlpine with the broad Scotch burr he brought to all foreign tongues, whether English or Hindustani ; and last, but very far from least, the English contingent from the City, who, looking for the most part steady-going warm men of business, gave great confidence to the meeting, but slight hold to the brush of the portrait-painter.

Amid enthusiastic cheering, Mr. Childersleigh got on his legs to address himself to a sea of beaming faces. "He stood there," he began, "after a six months' probation, for himself and those he had the pleasure to act with and the honour to preside among, to render an account of their stewardship. From the cordial, he might almost say the affectionate reception that greeted him, he hoped he might assume it to be the sentiment of the meeting, that the important interests confided to his colleagues and himself, had not suffered in their hands." (Renewed and prolonged cheering.) "If he knew anything of himself, he was not an over-sanguine man—as a simple question of business he felt it would be gross imprudence to excite hopes that might possibly prove fallacious ; but this he would say, and no less could he say in common candour, that the more they looked back on their past, the more promise would they gather for their future. The field before them was a boundless one, they had taken the first step that was proverbially so difficult, and he must say it appeared to him, from the strides with which they were moving onwards, that, without knowing it, they had drawn on a pair of seven-leagued boots." (Much laughter.)

"He could not venture to ask them to look at this board, but he would recommend them to cast their eyes round that meeting. Was not their brotherhood one to which any man might be proud of belonging? For the credit that was the breath of their nostrils, the essential principle of their life, how did that stand with the world? But six short months had passed since they had launched their infant company, and now each 10*l.* embarked in it was fetching 18*l.* in open market. Before their vessel had well cleared the port, their venture had begun to return them profits, and already their officers had the legitimate satisfaction of announcing an interim dividend of ten per cent. The dividend might have been a higher one, but the directors had determined to take 'caution' for their watchword. To one thing he would pledge himself, that every shilling of that dividend had been honestly and discreetly earned." (Tremendous applause.) "He used the word 'discreetly' advisedly, because, as he trusted and believed, the directors had steered the happy mean between the timid and the rash; while giving a wide berth to anything like reckless speculation, they had made it their study to avoid the shoals of excessive caution, on which so many well-meaning but slow-going, old-fashioned establishments lay stranded. Fortunately the sea they sailed was one where prudence itself need not content itself with trifling profits, and all the time they had the gratification of knowing their mission was as much philanthropical as practical." (Much enthusiasm.) "Above all let the shareholders never forget this, that there was nothing their directors courted more than publicity. A certain discretion must be conceded them indeed, and in justice to the feelings of their customers they could not invariably condescend on names. But with that reservation, what he said to them was this, and he knew in saying it he spoke the sentiment of his colleagues: 'Treat us with the same frankness we show towards you, and come and tell us candidly when you think we are going wrong.'" (Great cheering and "We will.")

Then Mr. Childersleigh, having favoured his audience with a few figures, and acknowledged in the handsomest terms the individual services of some of his colleagues whom he singled out for mention, excused himself for encroaching any longer on the valuable time of the meeting, and resumed his seat amid a regular ovation.

Some formal questions were asked, and the adoption of the report was moved and seconded amidst irrepressible enthusiasm. The Rev. Dr. Silke Reynardson had been pitched on as a representative shareholder, as at once holding a large stake in the Company and being entirely unconnected with trade, to move the vote of thanks to the Governor, the Deputy-Governor, and the Board. In the course of a long life, the Rev. Doctor had amassed a handsome independence, chiefly as a popular preacher, and if the *Crédit Foncier* and *Mobilier* of Turkey only yielded him as rich returns as the pathos and fervour of his sacred eloquence had done, he would have no reason to complain. His was the rare gift of drawing congregations and tears; of stirring feelings to their profoundest depths, till the fair hearers

found their lace-bordered pocket-handkerchiefs all too scanty, and saw in them a home-borne parable of the unsatisfying character of the vanities of this wicked world.

Now as it hung on his honeyed lips, or was hurried along by his fervid action, his entranced City audience, to most of whom seconds were precious, ceased to drag at their watch-chains; they even listened with tolerant sympathy when he diverged into a parenthetical analysis of his personal feelings and an exposition of the unselfish reasons which had made a self-denying pillar of religion hazard the imputation of a worldly dalliance with mammon. As to methods of money-getting, every man's conscience, as he told them, must be his individual law; yet if any one of them found little time, among manifold engagements, to check off, as he might say, the promptings of that inward monitor of his, why, they were fortunate in having so reliable a guide as their admirable and excellent Governor. He could tell them—laying his hand on his heart—that he believed Mr. Childersleigh a man as conscientious as he was honourable, and as honourable as he had proved himself able.

The harmonious proceedings were drawing to a close, when Lord Rushbrook chanced to catch Mr. Hemprigge's eye, and the appealing expression in Mr. Hemprigge's face. At the preliminary meeting of officials, Mr. Hemprigge had, much to his lordship's annoyance, made a great point of his addressing the meeting, with a view to the adorning of the report designed for general circulation. His lordship had at first laughingly, then impatiently, parried the entreaties that addressed themselves alternately to his public spirit and private interests. He had listened to the Doctor's glowing praises of his cousin with a twinkle in his eyes that somewhat disconcerted the eloquent divine, whose look naturally sought the face of the man of highest rank on the platform. Now a happy thought seemed to strike him, and, rising to his feet with infinite promptitude, he craved, with great presence of mind, and in the name of the unimpeachable credit of the Company, the indulgence of the meeting. He would detain them, he pledged himself, but a minute or two, while he entreated them to discharge a debt of common justice. Charmed by the unlooked-for privilege of hearing his lordship, a respectful hush dominated the meeting. When he rose to speak it had been on the point of breaking up, with the noisy demonstrations of a parcel of enfranchised schoolboys.

The Deputy-Governor then proceeded to say, in easy and unembarrassed language, that he felt he should imperfectly discharge the duties the shareholders had honoured him by entrusting to him, if he hesitated before their dispersion to remind them of a something that seemed to him to have been most unaccountably forgotten. For himself, he was eager to pay an honest, if inadequate, tribute to one—he did not wish to condescend to invidious distinctions, or resort to those comparisons that are proverbially odious—to one of the most active and intelligent members of their *personnel*. Then, with an air of utter unconsciousness, and a delicate

mimicry, which some might suspect but few could have sworn to, he modelled a fervent eulogy on the Managing Director, upon the Rev. Dr. Reynardson's eloquent praises of the Governor.

"It may have been my fortune," said his lordship, "to have enjoyed more frequent opportunities than perhaps any gentleman present of appreciating Mr. Hemprigge in his private dealings, and it is my pride to bear testimony to the unstinted interest he has taken himself and succeeded in exacting of others in any transactions where I have had to do with him. But you have all had opportunities of seeing him as the man of business. I would rather speak of him simply as the man. Mr. Hemprigge, gentlemen, is eminently fitted to take a prominent part in a mission like ours, where, as my eloquent relative in the chair has so well observed, philanthropy and commerce travel hand in hand." (A smothered anathema from the smiling Governor, stifled in the prevailing applause.) "For Mr. Hemprigge, while eminently practical, and gifted with business talents of a very rare order, has, during his brief and unobtrusive career, done as much towards relieving the necessities of his fellows as any man I am acquainted with. But this, you will say, is beside the question; and I own my feelings may for the moment have got the upper hand." ("They do you honour, my lord!" from a benevolent and excited-looking old gentleman in the front seats.) "In moving, then, the vote of thanks which, in my opinion, Mr. Hemprigge has so well merited of us, I will merely content myself with adding that, in the unlikely event of the temporary absence of our assiduous Governor, sensitive shareholders, in search of moral counsels and example, may be assured of finding a guide, a philosopher, and a friend in our managing director. Mr. Hemprigge, gentlemen, is a man at least as shrewd as he is honest, and to the full as honest as he is unselfish."

Three gentlemen at least had sat on thorns throughout his lordship's speech, and these were the Governor, Dr. Silke Reynardson, and Mr. Hemprigge. The first heard it in a cold perspiration, bitterly repenting the hour when he had recruited this reckless guerilla for high command, in abject alarm as to what he might say next, and wondering how soon the audience might find him out and shout him down. When Lord Rushbrook at last resumed his seat, Hugh gave vent to a deep sigh of relief, and venturing to steal a look around, could hardly believe the assurance of eyes and ears that the speech had been far from the least successful of the meeting.

"May we be delivered from all temptation," he muttered, piously. "If shareholders stand that, they'll stand anything."

As for Hemprigge, when he had first caught the import of his lordship's oratory, his face had become radiant, and he had set himself to conning over a little speech of his own, prepared beforehand, against the happy event of its being wanted. As Lord Rushbrook proceeded, his victim's mind settled into a condition compared to which that of Childersleigh was serenity itself. His self-control was considerable, but

with all the resolution he could summon to his aid he could not prevent his inward misery flinging out its shadow on his face.

Fortunately the intelligent witnesses of his martyrdom set his pangs down to the nervous tremors of a man unhabituated to figuring on public platforms before audiences so imposing and distinguished. When he stammered out in broken sentences his profound sense of the honour done him by one who, he was proud to hear, had dignified him with the name of friend, they were only confirmed in that belief, and good-naturedly encouraged the timid *débutant* with their ringing cheers. So even Hemprigge retreated apparently with all the honours of war, and the close of the meeting was to the full as pleasant as its beginning had been.

"Well, Hugh, what did you think of my maiden effort from any platform?" asked Lord Rushbrook, as he unceremoniously entered the Governor's private room after the meeting.

"I'd just as soon not tell you, Rushbrook. I don't often lose my temper, and as I've kept it so long, I'll try and keep it still."

"*Mea culpa, mea culpa.* Upon my soul, Hugh, all joke apart, I came on purpose to tell you that I knew I had behaved abominably, but then think of the temptation. A full quarter of an hour of that sanctimonious old humbug, and the chance of paying off Hemprigge, who sat there robed in his virtue, as if butter wouldn't melt in his mouth. But I'll never do it again, that I swear solemnly, and besides you must remember I was feeling their pulses all the time, ready to pull up the very moment I saw a glimmer of appreciation appear in any of their faces. All's well that ends well, and surely free confession and heartfelt repentance deserve plenary absolution. *A tout péché miséricorde*, especially for a first offence and on so joyful an occasion as this."

"Well, well, Rushbrook, luckily you seem to have done no harm, so for once let bygones be bygones,—the more so, that I for one picked up a good deal from your speech. It gave me the exact measure of the discretion of our Deputy-Governor and the intelligence of the shareholders of the *Crédit Foncier and Mobilier of Turkey*."

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